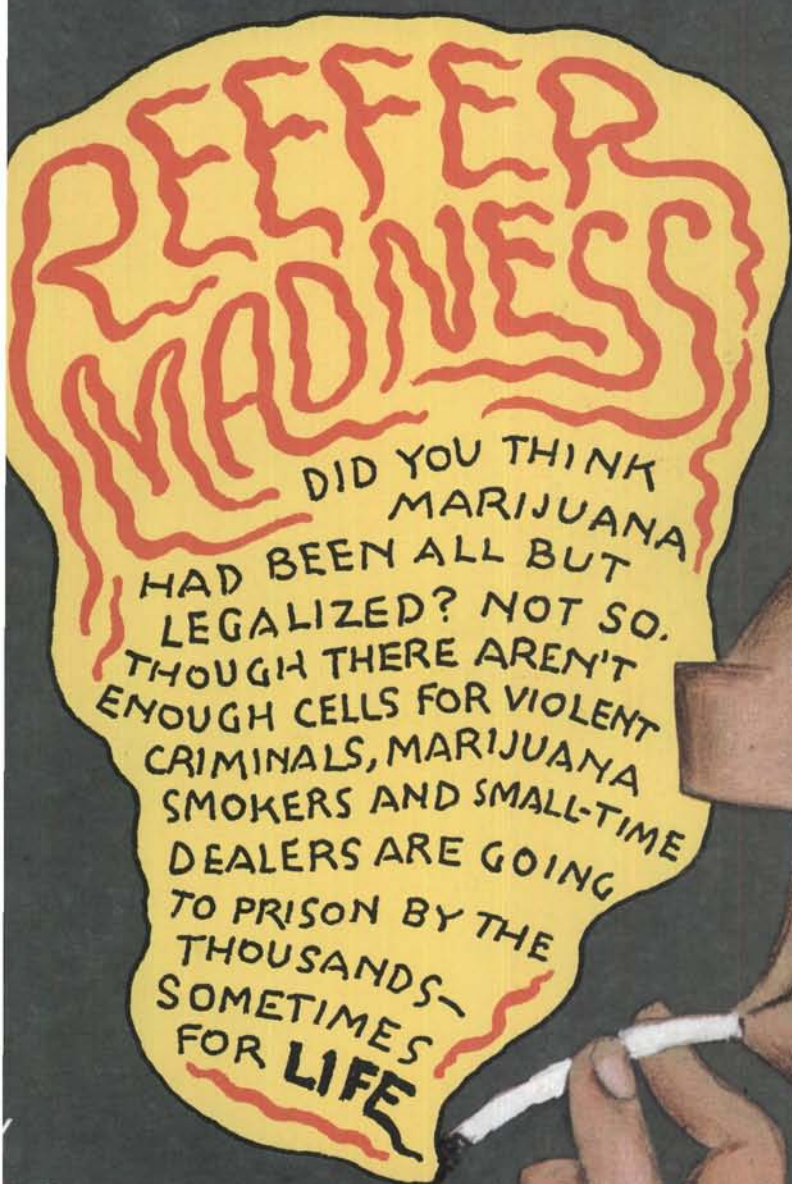


SEX-BIAS MYTH IN HEALTH CARE / A BLACK SEA VACATION

e Atlantic Monthly

AUGUST 1994



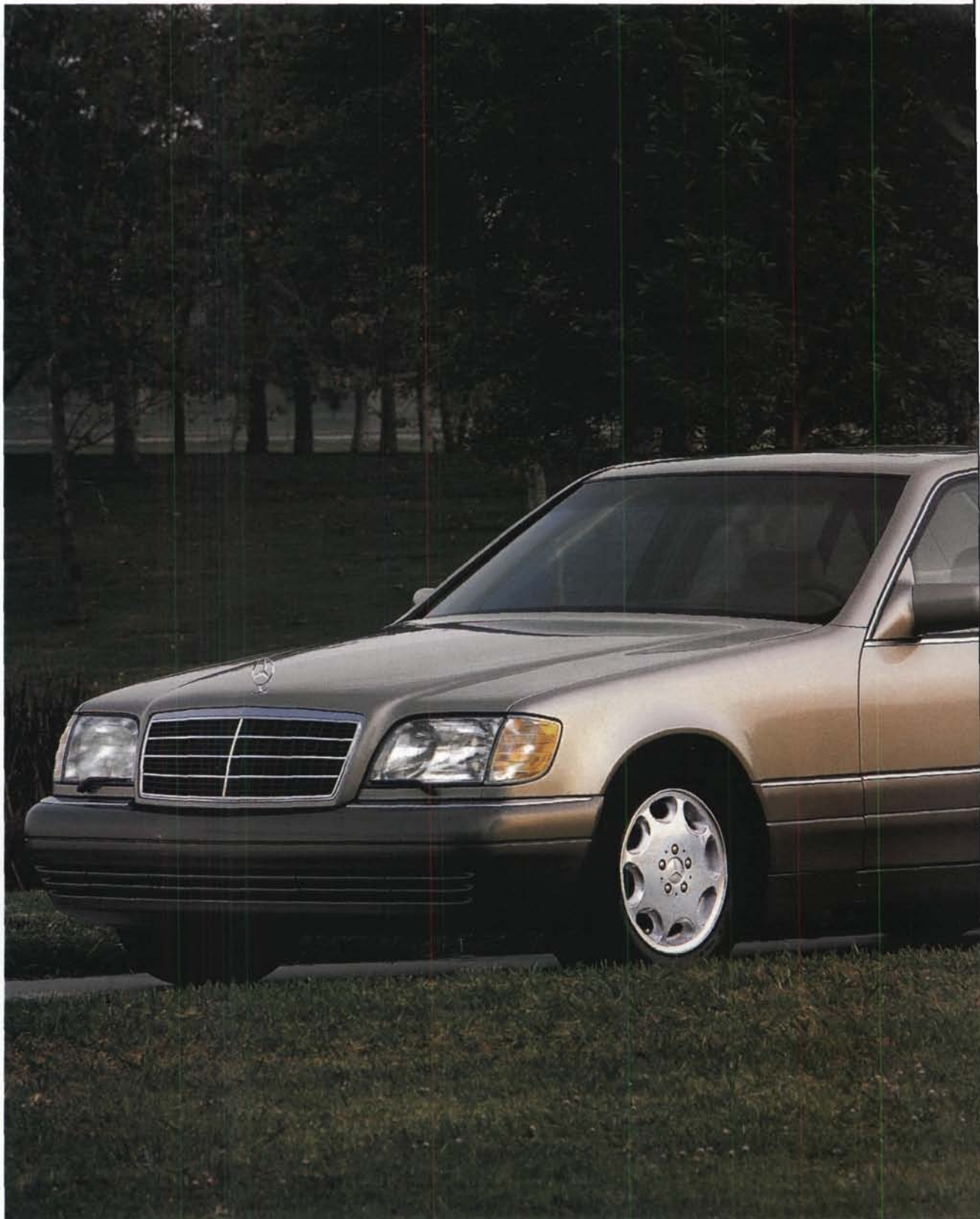
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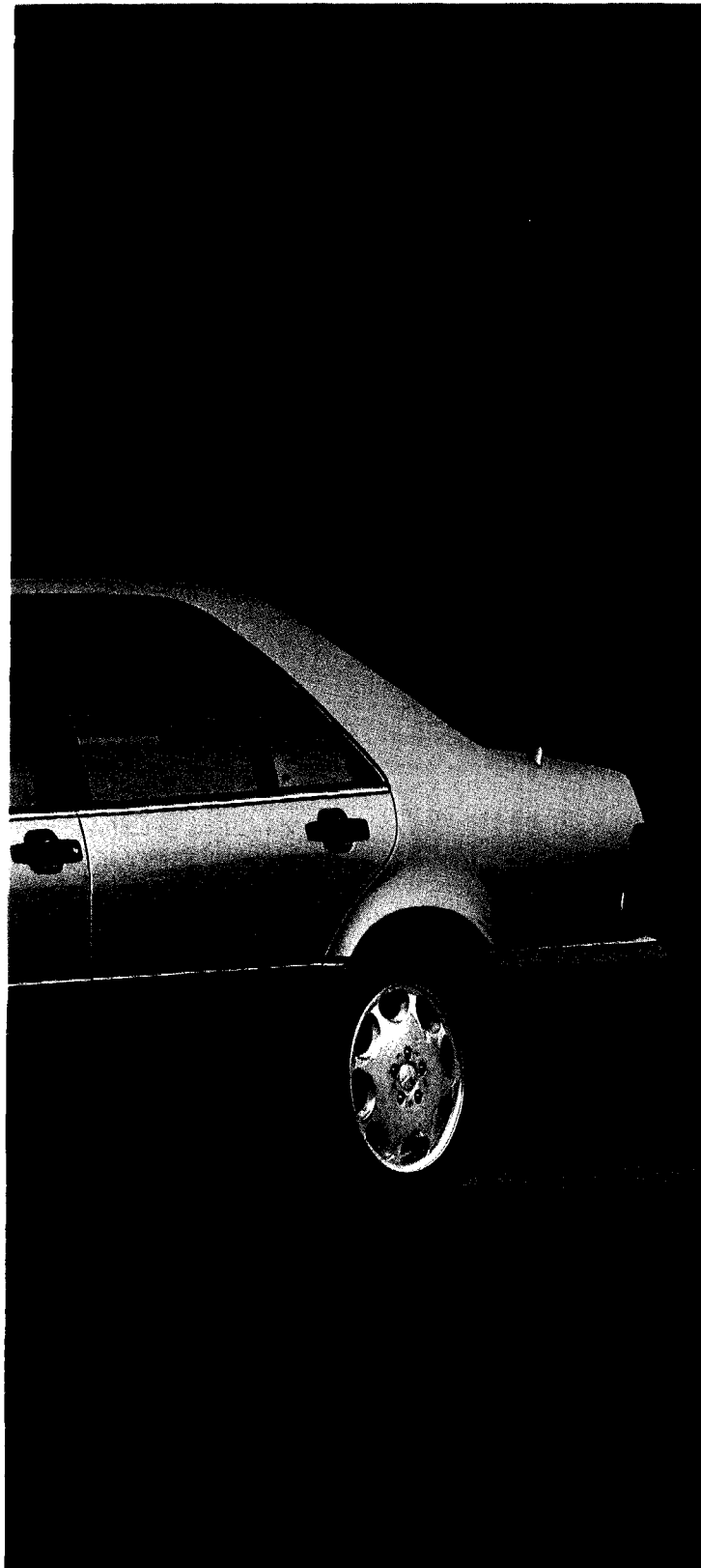
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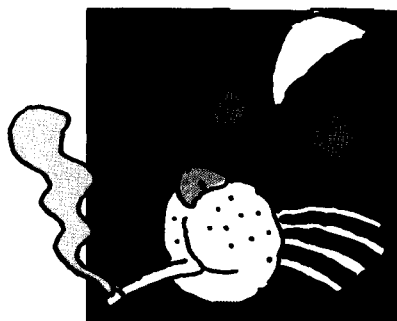
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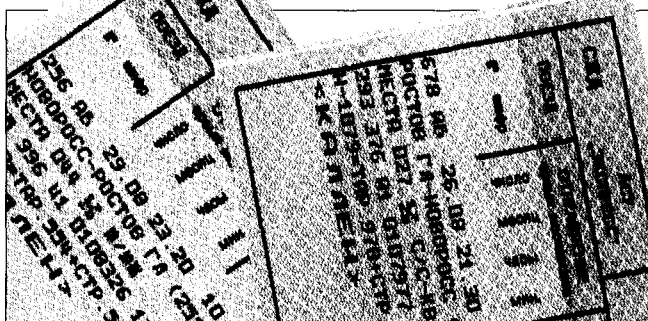
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The New S-Class



Page 45



Page 40



Page 81

REPORTS

20 Notes & Comment: Unreasonable Facsimile

Judging a competition in which computers attempt to converse with human beings.

by Frederick Allen

26 Foreign Affairs: Turabi's Law

Islamic government may be the future for a number of Middle Eastern and North African states. The experience of Sudan—the second radical Islamic state after Iran—suggests that it will be no panacea.

by William Langewiesche

34 Technology: Notes From the Underground

There are, our author argues, many forward-looking reasons to look downward: the next frontier may lie beneath our feet.

by Fred Hapgood

HUMOR, FICTION, & POETRY

52 The Unfrocked Governess

A poem
by Peter Davison

71 Rich

A short story
by Erin McGraw

45 Reefer Madness

Marijuana has been pushed so far out of the public imagination by other drugs, and its use is so casually taken for granted in some quarters of society, that one might assume it had been effectively decriminalized. In truth, the government has never been tougher on marijuana offenders than it is today. In an era when violent criminals frequently walk free or receive modest jail terms, tens of thousands of people are serving long sentences for breaking marijuana laws.

by Eric Schlosser

66 The Sex-Bias Myth in Medicine

A view has gained wide currency that men's health complaints are taken more seriously than those of women, and that medical research has benefited men more than it has women. "In fact," the author writes, "one sex does appear to be favored in the amount of attention devoted to its medical needs. . . . That sex is not men, however."

by Andrew G. Kadar, M.D.



81 Depths

A drawing
by Guy Billout

BOOKS

89 Cormac McCarthy's Bizarre Genius

An essay on the author of *All the Pretty Horses* and, most recently, *The Crossing*.

by John W. Aldridge

97 Brief Reviews

by Phoebe-Lou Adams

ARTS & LEISURE

40 Travel: Elemental Pleasures

Russia may as yet offer a traveler few amenities, to

put it mildly, but vacationers manage to have fun there anyway.

by Robert Cullen

82 Food: The Virtuous Oil

Why good olive oil costs so much—and is worth paying for.

by Corby Kummer

86 Sport: Pool Sharks

The art of the hustle. We may condemn the pool shark's duplicity, the author observes, and yet "because the shark preys upon hubris—a human weakness that Americans particularly abhor—he is the sort of miscreant we tolerate."

by Peter Griffin

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

4 745 Boylston Street/ Contributors

8 Letters

16 The August Almanac

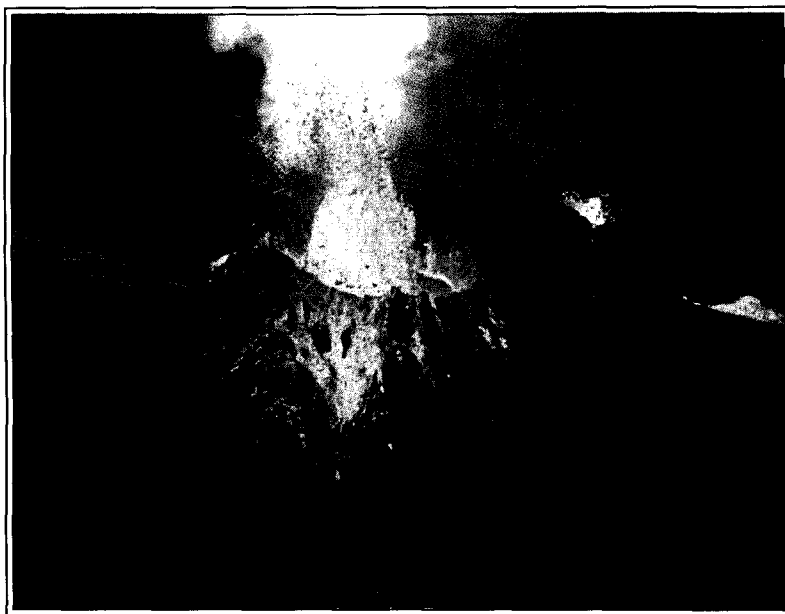
99 The Puzzler

by Emily Cox and
Henry Rathvon

100 Word Watch

by Anne H. Soukhanov

Cover art
by Seymour Chwast



Eruption of Kilauea volcano on Hawaii

“When you’re working on a volcano, your equipment and wits can’t fail you.”

—Dr. Michael Garcia

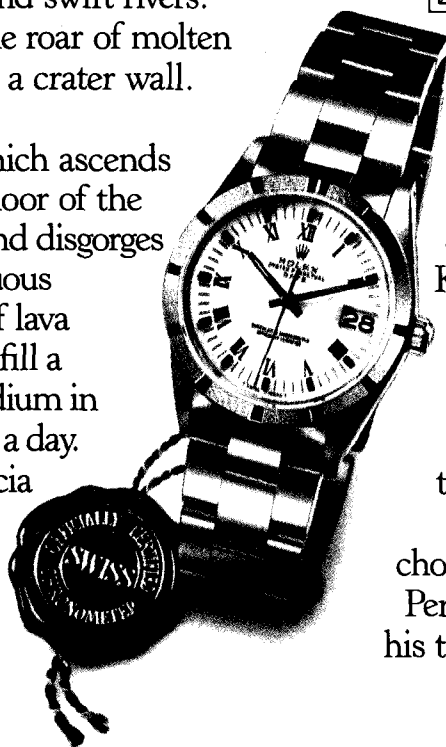
Earthquakes rock the black, rippled terrain. Fire fountains explode from the mountain’s side. Iridescent orange lava, as hot as 2100° F, sweeps down the volcano’s flanks in thin sheets and swift rivers. The air is filled with the roar of molten rock slamming against a crater wall. It rains pumice.

This is Kilauea, which ascends majestically from the floor of the Pacific and disgorges a continuous stream of lava that can fill a large stadium in less than a day.



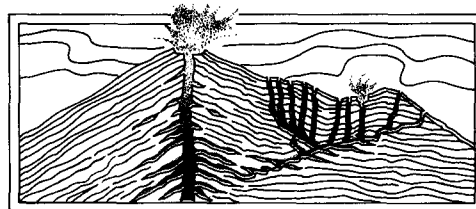
Dr. Michael Garcia

Professor Michael Garcia has devoted his career to exploring the mysteries of volcanoes, particularly Kilauea,



one of the most active in the world. “It’s the premier place to study how volcanoes work,” he said.

Dr. Garcia has been gathering data on Kilauea since 1978. When he is not in the lab conducting chemical analyses of lava, Garcia is in the field, measuring intervals between fire-fountain pulses and plucking samples from lava rivers. He believes that a keener understanding of the volcano and its internal structure can help scientists



Magma conduits inside Kilauea

better anticipate eruptions.

Working in such a hostile environment, Garcia must rely on his experience, instinct and equipment. “You have to respect Kilauea’s might—especially when you feel it rumbling beneath your feet,” he said. Demanding the highest standards from his instruments, Dr. Garcia insists that they be rugged and reliable.

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745 BOYLSTON STREET

"IT unfolded as a series of surprises," says Eric Schlosser of reporting "Reefer Madness," his story about the marijuana laws and the marijuana industry in America, which begins in this issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* (and will conclude next month). "The most surprising thing of all, perhaps, was learning of the existence of a rural midwestern underworld, where drug fortunes are being made on what seem to be humble farms. The domestic marijuana industry was born in the 1980s. I think that many of the ways in which that decade transformed this country are only now becoming apparent. While visiting Indiana, I realized that beneath the surface strange things are lurking in a once-familiar landscape."

Eric Schlosser comes relatively fresh to the job of journalist, this being his second published article. His first, "The Bomb Squad," appeared in *The Atlantic* last January. Schlosser is a native of New York City and a 1981 graduate of Princeton University, where he studied American history. During his Princeton years he had two brief brushes with magazine journalism, working one summer in the mailroom of *New York* magazine and another summer as a fact checker at *Esquire*. After Princeton, Schlosser attended Oxford University, where he studied late-



SHAUNA REDFORD

nineteenth-century British imperial history. He has long nurtured a serious interest in playwriting, and wrote a novel while working for a community-action agency in Vermont. Schlosser now lives with his wife and two children in New York City, where he works for Robert DeNiro's Tribeca Productions.

For this article Schlosser interviewed nearly a hundred people and traveled through Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas, four of the chief marijuana-producing states. Although "Reefer Madness" focuses on one case, in which a life sentence was meted out to a middleman named Mark Young, Schlosser emphasizes that the article is not about that single case but rather about broad changes in the law and about a pattern of law enforcement. "I have files stuffed with other marijuana cases in which the sentences were cruel and unjust—far too many to include here," he says. "A five-year sentence is more than enough to end a career and break up a family. Many of the people I spoke to had no idea there were others being similarly punished. The laws are not widely known, even among marijuana growers. I wanted to give readers a sense of what thousands of people are being put through." —THE EDITORS

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Phoebe-Lou Adams (Brief Reviews) has been a member of the *Atlantic* staff for fifty years. Her short reviews have been appearing in the magazine, under various titles, since September of 1952.

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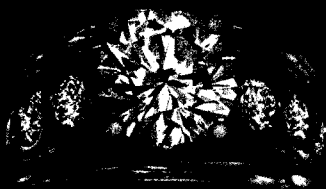
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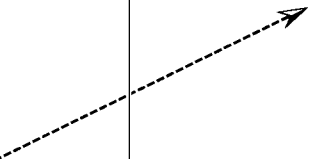


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LETTERS

Code of the Streets

Elijah Anderson ("The Code of the Streets," May *Atlantic*) examines many ways in which issues of self-esteem, especially for youths, are intrinsic to the etiquette of violence. Yet he never seems to focus on the fact that what these young people lack—a sense that their identity as men *is* of intrinsic value—is a function of the damaged culture and families in which most of them now struggle to grow up. In terms of that culture's structure, a man is simply an implement for brief games of status and sexual pleasure, and for getting children and a government subsidy. Once a male has served that purpose, his identity, as Anderson describes, is existential in the most savage sense, improvised constantly in an environment in which little if any solid reinforcement is provided for male identity.

In short, inner-city youths learn from infancy that men don't matter, that they are extrinsic and terrifyingly contingent creatures. And they learn this in intimate and violent fashion at the hands of their mothers, who, as Anderson notes, do not hesitate to "teach" their male children by beating them. What does a little boy, two or three or five years old, learn when he is told by an enraged mother that he has "a devil in him" that must be beaten out? This is a form of domestic violence that newspaper headlines mostly ignore. It is not only a terrible abuse in itself but also a source of violence later recirculated through society. The government-subsidized sex and sadism of Clarabel Ventura is only the tip of the iceberg.

Eugene Narrett
Maynard, Mass.

The children who resort quickly to violence, see themselves as living short lives, and overinvest in "respect" are the children of the poorest, most dysfunctional poor. They are the children of the alcoholic, the addict, and the criminal.

They are not exclusively black, as a casual review of the literature of delinquency or criminality will confirm. They are in fact a minority within a minority.

I share Elijah Anderson's view that they are victims of racism and a social structure that no longer provides legitimate and visible ladders out of poverty. I also share his hope that our country will see this not as a hopeless situation but as one that requires resources and supports for correction.

Albert R. Griffith
Englewood, N.J.

Only if street thugs believed they were worth something would the vicious cycle Elijah Anderson rightly condemns be broken. If Anderson had held the street thugs personally responsible, I would feel he believed they were worth something. Rather, he excuses their actions largely by blaming others. His concerns, therefore, do not evoke much sympathy from those of us who have a survival code based on personal responsibility, self-discipline, hard work, and reality-based self-esteem.

Theodore A. Goldman
Los Angeles, Calif.

Everyone needs self-esteem and the respect of others to be happy. But true respect is something earned, not something coerced or demanded. Most victims of racism and discrimination rise above it for the ones they love, if not for themselves. They earn the respect of others and build their own self-esteem by making the best they can of their lives.

R. Jeffrey Montgomery
Indianapolis, Ind.

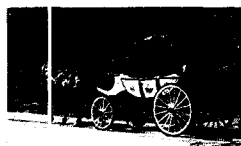
As long as the police officers in this country are trained to protect an inequitable distribution of power, to serve the fears of the dominant culture, and to refuse to respect all people equally, black people and people of other "suspect" groups will have few options other than



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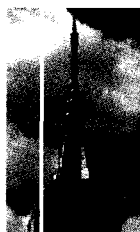
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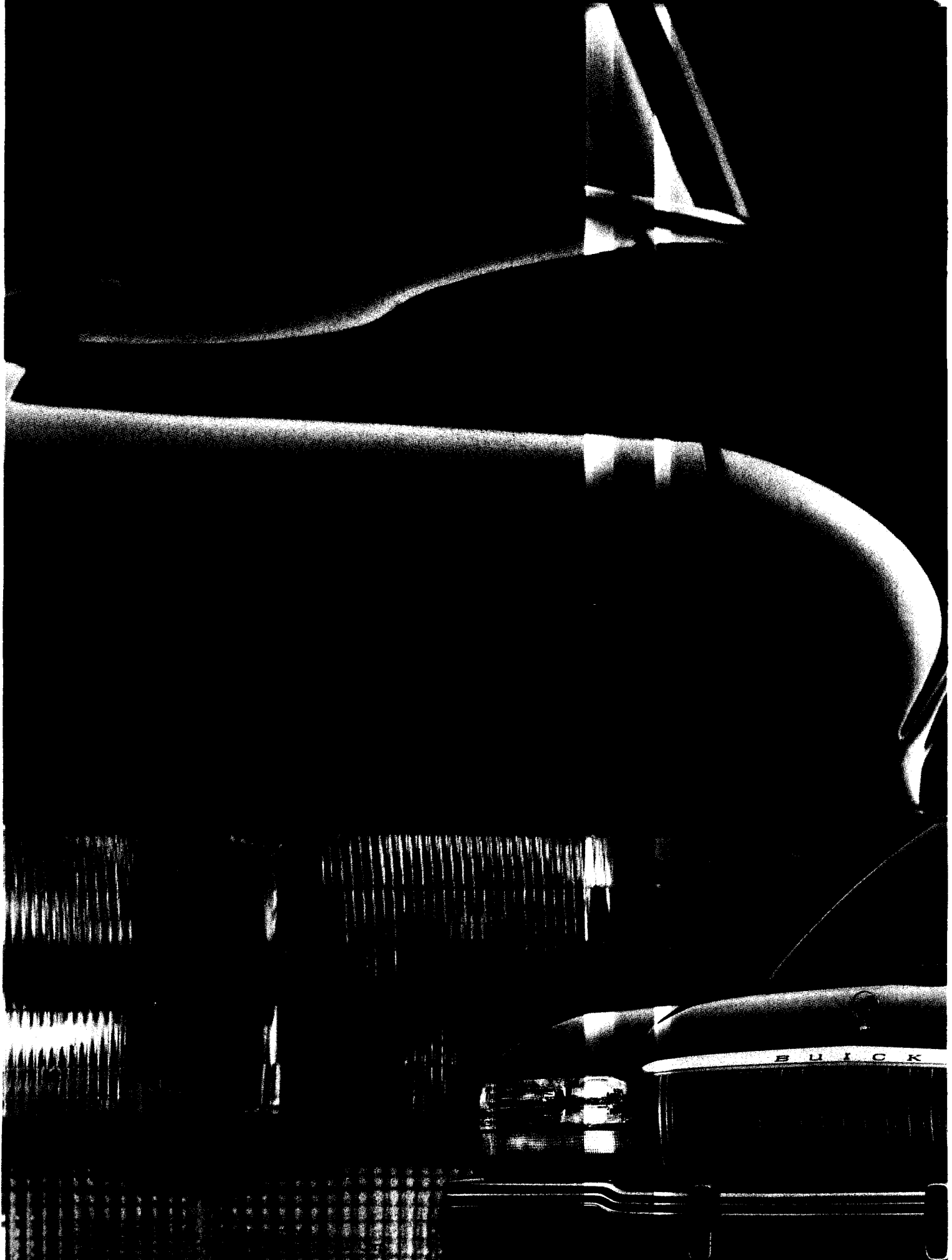


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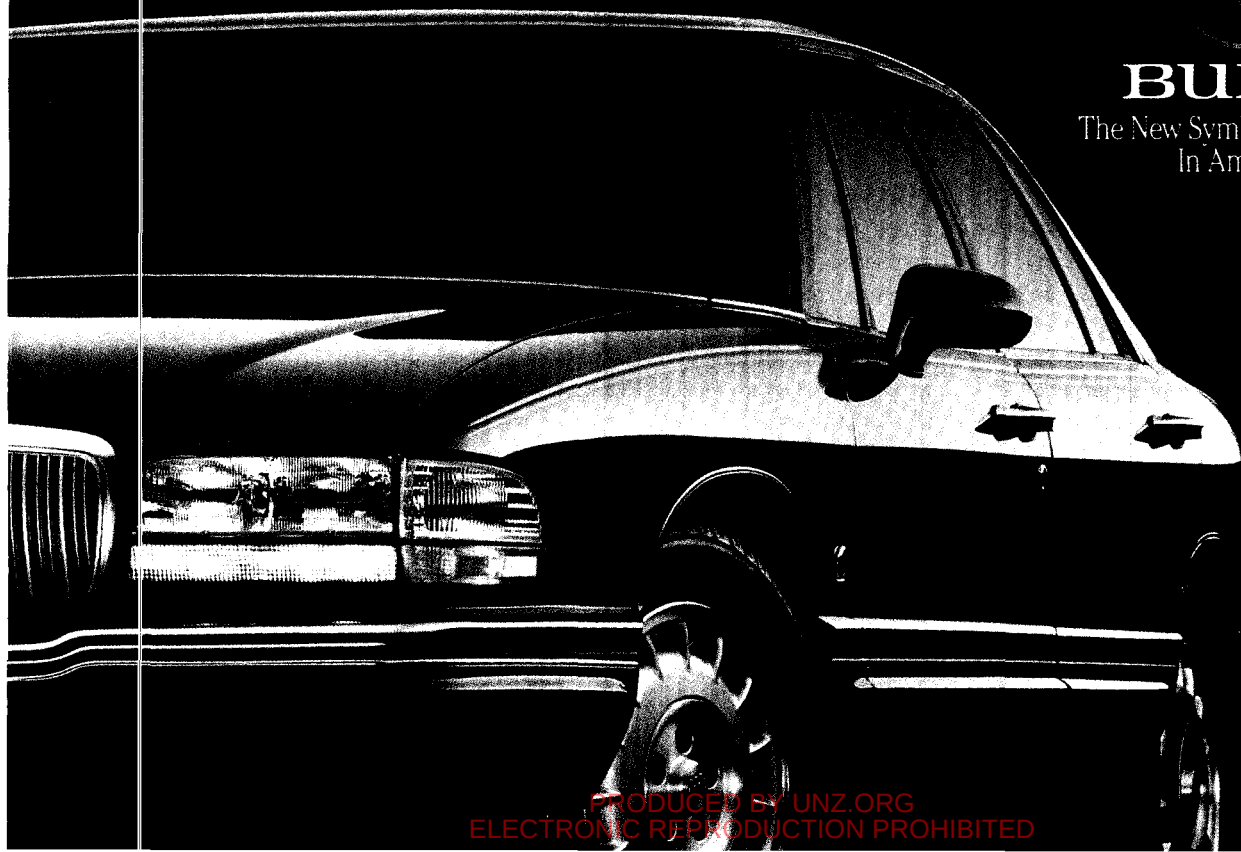
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violence and self-destructive striking out. If black people can somehow realize how well that response serves certain segments of the dominant culture, they may be able to create a new code that will not only ensure their survival but also allow them to flourish.

Dave Dix
Minneapolis, Minn.

Elijah Anderson fails to address the powerful influence of the commercial media, with their emphasis on materialism and the acceptance and perpetuation of violence as a solution to complex problems. The simplistic division of the world into good guys and bad guys goes a long way toward explaining America's predilection for outlaws and racial disharmony.

In many ways the code of the streets is no different from the code of our culture, and that is the real issue worth pondering.

Brian Burke
Covelo, Calif.

One part of Elijah Anderson's concluding assumption rings true—that the vicious cycle of destruction is completed when the violence of the inner city confirms “the negative feelings many whites and some middle-class blacks harbor toward the ghetto poor, further legitimating the oppositional culture.”

But the next step in the assumption is troublesome. The notion that racism and “endemic joblessness” lead to the violence that street youths engage in is dangerously simplistic. The implication is that the oppositional and self-destructive attitudes of inner-city residents are not their fault.

This suggestion—that the destructive behavior of the urban subculture is the fault of mainstream society—is one that even many mainstream black intellectuals no longer buy.

Surely *any* society—not just the American society—whose decent values, morals, and peaceful way of life were threatened by a spreading subculture of lawlessness would react with defensiveness, fear, and even hostility toward the threat.

But that doesn't make mainstream society *responsible* for the devastation that reigns in the ghetto. The only way to break the cycle is to cure the psychopathology of self-destructiveness and

moral vacuousness. This can be accomplished only from *inside*. No amount of liberal “understanding” or federal financing will reverse the trend.

Peter D. Goldmann
Irvington, N.Y.

Elijah Anderson replies:

The American occupational structure is now undergoing profound change, from manufacturing to services and high tech, at the same time that our economy is becoming increasingly global. Over the past decade our inner-city areas have suffered from active disinvestment by major corporations and by the federal government. As a result, great numbers of jobs have left the inner city for the suburbs, for nonmetropolitan America, and for Third World countries where labor is cheaper. A great many people, particularly poor blacks, are not making an effective adjustment to this change. At the same time, the very social programs that once aided so many inner-city poor people and gave many young people hope for the future have been slashed. Schools in the inner city have been allowed to deteriorate to the point that they are not educating poor black children to function in today's world. Social breakdown is the result. For some of the most desperate people, the underground economy of drugs, vice, and crime picks up the slack. The resulting poverty becomes persistent and is best described as structural. In these circumstances it is difficult to blame the victim.

Moreover, our society faces the powerful legacy of white supremacy and racial apartheid. Racial discrimination in employment for so many inner-city black people continues to be a very significant problem. Even though we have made progress through various remedial efforts, this progress has largely benefited the black middle class. Even a cursory inspection of so many businesses, particularly small businesses, shows a startling absence of black workers, especially in managerial positions. A great many well-qualified black workers are stuck in entry-level jobs with little hope of promotion to positions often reserved for whites or other non-African-Americans. Many people who have not had to deal with this problem find it difficult to empathize with those who do have to. But this situation is replicated thousands of times

throughout the land and indirectly fuels the alienation I refer to.

This racial exclusion, compounded by centuries of indifference, brings about antisocial behavior and a great sense of despair, alienation, and hopelessness in inner-city communities. The “code of the streets” is a reflection of all this; it is the way human beings adapt culturally to a bad situation. Without this code the inner-city streets would be even more violent than they are.

At the same time, I would agree with those who draw a connection between the code of the streets and the glorification of sex, violence, and materialism in the wider society. Inner-city residents watch the same television shows and commercials as everyone else and are quick to pick up on media images. Many young people are particularly alert to the connection made between material possessions as an indication of personal well-being and instances of disregard of the law in an attempt to “get over” on the system. When drug dealers and other hustlers in the inner city see high public officials and corporate executives indicted for malfeasance, it often confirms the generalized belief that “everybody's doing it” and only the careless ones or the stupid ones or simply the unlucky ones get caught.

To deal with the social problems I point to in my article, we might begin by making a frontal assault on racial discrimination in employment—by making the occupational structure more receptive to black people. We must think of inner-city youth as worthy of a serious investment of our resources. We must commit ourselves to seriously upgrading inner-city schools, including relevant job training, so as to give young people a stake in the system. Moreover, we need to create opportunities for independent income, not simply because it is the morally right thing to do but because we all have a stake in a peaceful and just society.

Taxi!

“Taxi!,” by Sheryl Fragin (May *Atlantic*), relies on inaccuracies and distortions to support Fragin's thesis that the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission is in cahoots with taxi owners to exploit drivers, and that “there is

Today your kids can watch Drug Deals, Shootouts, and Sex on TV, or they can learn Spanish, French, German, or Italian. Your choice.

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disturbingly good reason for [drivers'] recklessness and frenzy."

Let me juxtapose her most egregious statements against the facts.

Fragin: The TLC "is far more concerned with the interests of taxi-fleet owners . . . than with those of a ragtag band of drivers. . . . Even though many drivers oppose a fare increase that owners are currently demanding, the commission seems barely to hear them. . . . The TLC seems to buy the owners' arguments wholeheartedly."

Fact: On March 31, 1994, the Taxi and Limousine Commission rejected owners' request for a fare increase. The TLC determined that owners had not demonstrated that increased costs equaled hardship. In fact, the TLC found that owners' profit margins were 32 to 45 percent—eight times those of other vehicle-leasing industries—yielding per-cab profits of \$15,500 to \$21,300. *The TLC recommended that no fare increase be considered until owners implement improvements in service and drivers' working conditions.* Widely covered in the New York press, the TLC decision was unanimously hailed as scathing to owners and favorable to passengers and drivers.

Fragin knew of the TLC decision before her article went to press. Assuming that she would be interested, I telephoned her with the results of the fare review. Unfortunately, she was not interested in facts that did not support her thesis.

Fragin: "One favorite scam. . . is the dirty-cab summons. . . . One cabbie advocate estimates that each medallion gets \$1,000 to \$1,500 worth of dirty-cab tickets each year."

Fact: Summonses for dirty cabs averaged \$12.15 per cab last year (5,733 summonses at \$25 apiece, divided by 11,787 medallions). Earlier Fragin correctly noted that the TLC collected about \$5 million in fines *in total*. Using her source's calculations, the TLC would have collected \$12 million to \$18 million in dirty-cab fines alone.

Fragin: "Even though the TLC claims to have a 75 percent conviction rate for passenger-initiated complaints . . . a close look at 222 such hearings held last October shows that only four percent ended in acquittal."

Fact: Of the 224 passenger hearings *scheduled* to occur in October, 110 were held, twenty-five adjourned, and eighty-

nine dismissed with no hearing, owing to nonappearance of the complainant. Of complaints with a final disposition, 58 percent were dismissed.

Fragin: "Only a handful [of judges] are black or Hispanic, let alone Pakistani or Indian, in an industry where half the new drivers come from the Indian subcontinent."

Fact: It is outrageous to imply that justice would be dispensed differently based on the race or ethnic background of the judge. Besides, does Fragin believe that every five years, as driver demographics change, the TLC should throw out the sitting judges for a new ethnic set?

Fragin: Quoting one of her sources, Richard Weinberg: "Judges are basically instructed not to interfere with revenue enhancement."

Fact: This is a serious but unsubstantiated allegation that is dead wrong. It is disgraceful of Weinberg to make such a statement, and it is even more disgraceful that Fragin would include such an allegation after refusing to interview the TLC's chief judge—despite multiple offers to facilitate such an interview. The current chief judge, who has been in that post for seven years, is surely better equipped than Fragin's source—a former chief judge whose tenure lasted seven months, seven years ago—to explain how judges are trained and instructed.

It should come as no great surprise that a regulated industry resents its regulators. However, in the case of "Taxi!" overreliance on the gripes of licensees and failure to understand the legitimate role of a regulatory agency have caused Fragin to forgo accurate, balanced reporting in favor of distortion and ax-grinding.

Fidel F. Del Valle

*Chairman, New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission
New York, N.Y.*

Sheryl Fragin replies:

I'm not surprised that Mr. Del Valle takes issue with my story, since it's not very flattering to his agency, but let me try to address his major points of contention.

First, although he eventually did veto the fare increase, Mr. Del Valle was very much behind it when I was researching my story. In November he carefully explained that taxi owners were suffering under increased costs and needed some

relief. He did call in March to say that he had received new information showing that drivers were earning far less than the TLC had assumed, and I included his change of heart in my piece. But he never told me his decision on the fare hike, which wasn't announced for another three weeks.

On the dirty-cab issue, I should have realized that my source's estimate was wildly off, since, as Mr. Del Valle correctly points out, the math doesn't make sense. I apologize for not doing the simple arithmetic before including that quotation.

As far as the hearings go, our numbers are not so different. According to print-outs from the TLC's own data base, there were roughly 222 passenger-initiated cases last October (a couple weren't counted because the computer operator searched the wrong docket number, which is why I said "222 such hearings"). Among those, there were only nine acquittals—a four percent acquittal rate. Like Mr. Del Valle, I count eighty-nine cases in which the complainant didn't show. But at fourteen of those hearings drivers were hit with a \$75 fine for nonappearance, even though there was no case. And let's not forget that passengers can reinstate a case if they have an excuse for not making the hearing. These so-called dismissals can cost a driver plenty, which is why I included them in the total number of hearings. But if you struck them and the adjournments from the total, the acquittal rate would still be only eight percent.

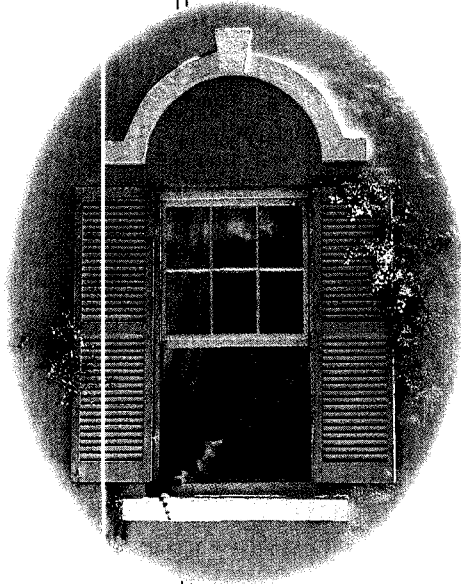
I'm curious about Mr. Del Valle's outrage over my mention of the ethnic composition of TLC judges, especially since he himself told me that "the ideal is to have more people who are naturally conversant with the community you're dealing with—you have a level of empathy that really does wonders." He explained that he actively tries to recruit minority judges, which he finds more effective than "trying to sensitize a New York WASP."

And finally, Mr. Del Valle mentions my refusing to interview the TLC's chief judge. I cannot recall anyone's inviting me to do so even once, much less several times. As I noted in my piece, I did talk to several current judges and spent a day in courtrooms that the TLC itself picked out.



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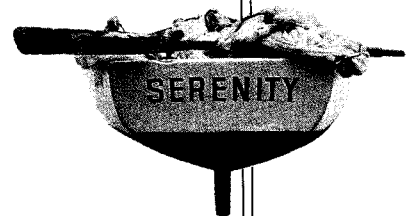


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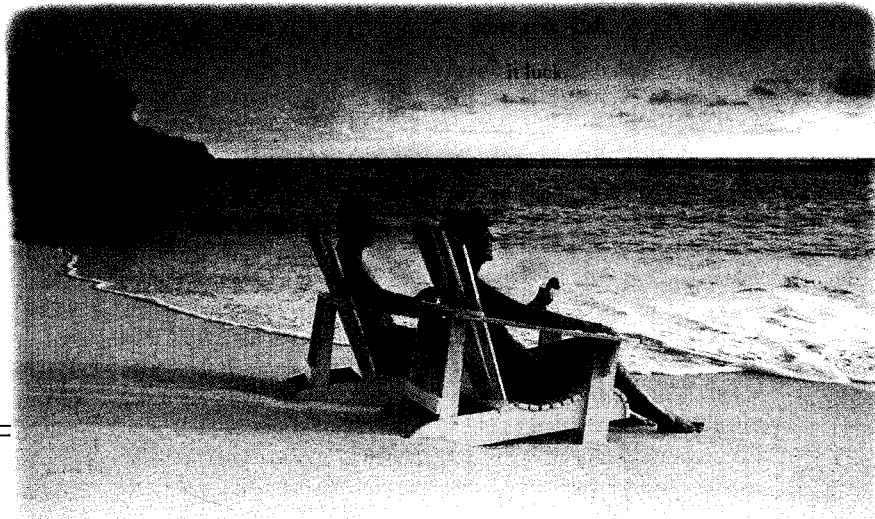
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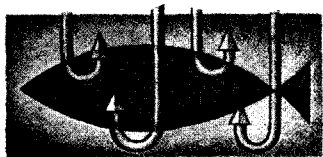
Q & A

Why on some hot days do the clouds have perfectly flat bases, as if their bottoms had been neatly shorn off?

The clouds that exhibit this eerie regularity are in the cumulus family, one of the 10 main cloud families. Unlike other clouds, they primarily develop vertically, as warm, moisture-laden air rises from the earth and then cools and condenses. The height at which this rising air reaches its dew point and begins to condense is usually a uniform distance from the earth, and so the bases of these clouds are uniform as well.

Food

Patrons of seafood restaurants the world over may find a new selection of fish on their menus as a result of this month's United Nations fishing conference. The 80-nation talks—the last phase of negotiations that began in March—will establish regulations that are meant to ensure responsible fishing practices. High on the agenda: reaching an agreement to establish new catch limitations for many overfished species, including haddock, cod, and Atlantic bluefin tuna, whose numbers have declined by 80 to 90 percent since 1970. Fishermen will be encouraged to target underutilized fish, such as dogfish and monkfish. Still at issue is whether the measures will be legally binding or simply advisory (and perhaps enforced by regional fishing organizations).



Environment

August 8, the Department of Energy is scheduled to begin tunneling into Nevada's Yucca Mountain to assess the site's suitability as the nation's first central repository for high-level nuclear waste—radioactive waste that is generated during the production of nuclear energy and weapons. Such waste has to date simply accumulated at nuclear facilities. Yucca Mountain is the only site being considered for this dubious honor. In a 1987 amendment to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, Congress struck the only alternatives—Hanford, Washington, and Deaf Smith County, Texas—from the DOE's list. Critics dubbed the legislation the "Screw Nevada Bill," arguing that the choice reflected Nevada's lack of political clout rather than scientific merit, and pointing out that the state neither uses nor produces nuclear power. Last year geologists found previously unknown fault zones in the Yucca area, but until the exploratory boring is complete, they will not know whether the faults pose a disqualifying risk.



Government

August 3, starting today manufacturers of all drugs for human beings and animals must observe new procedures mandated by the Food and Drug Administration to reduce the incidence of mislabeling. The regulations prohibit the use of gang-printing—printing sheets with multiple labels on them—for different items unless the labels are clearly distinguished by size, shape, or color. They also specify rigorous inspection practices to be followed by assembly lines packaging more than one drug type or strength. Some recent

consequences of labeling mix-ups: the hospitalization of a 41-year-old woman who became comatose after taking a diabetes medication that had been mislabeled an antibacterial agent, and the hospitalization of a six-year-old boy given a liquid tranquilizer that bore the label of a cold medicine. Also this month eight states will hold congressional-election primaries: Kansas, Michigan, and Missouri on the 2nd, Tennessee on the 4th, Colorado on the 9th, Wyoming on the 16th, and Alaska and Oklahoma on the 23rd.



The Skies

August 12, the Perseid meteor shower peaks tonight; best viewing will be after midnight, once the Moon has set. Last year, inspired by the approach of the Perseid's parent comet, many astronomical sources, including this one, mistakenly predicted a spectacular display. A smaller number of authorities, undaunted, are calling for it to materialize this year. 21, Full Moon, also known this month as the Green Corn or Woodcutter's Moon. 22, Saturn rises shortly after sunset; it is by far the brightest object other than the Moon, to its north, in its part of the sky.

Health & Safety

August 28, the University of Nebraska and West Virginia University will play the Kick Off Classic (the opening game of the college football season) under the watchful eyes of conference officials poised to levy strict new penalties for fighting. The National Collegiate Athletic Association has ruled that players or coaches involved in a fight must now sit out for up to two games; repeat of-



fenders will be taken off the team. Until this year the penalty was merely ejection from the game during which the fight occurred. The new rule is part of a larger effort to improve the image of college players. Also this month the peak season starts for valley fever, also known as San Joaquin fever, or coccidioidomycosis, a flu-like illness contracted after inhaling fungal spores found in the soil of the American Southwest and parts of Mexico and Central and South America. Some of those afflicted this year can blame the February earthquake in Los Angeles, which released vast quantities of moldy dust.

25 Years Ago

Herbert Gold, writing in the August, 1969, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Not every good story that a writer conceives can be written. Certain kinds of virtue are imaginable in the abstract, but not in the concretely moving and personal fashion that enables a particular storyteller to work the mystery of his own personality around the mystery of the characters he hopes to bring into life. A film producer once said to me, 'How do you block out a story?' and I stared at him with blocks in my eyes and a block on my tongue. You don't block out a story. You let it grow. You nourish it, encourage it, even push it a bit with sweat and ferocity, but you go where it goes. You try to travel on with it. It surprises you. Any tentative outline or scenario is made to be destroyed. You are the victim of its will."



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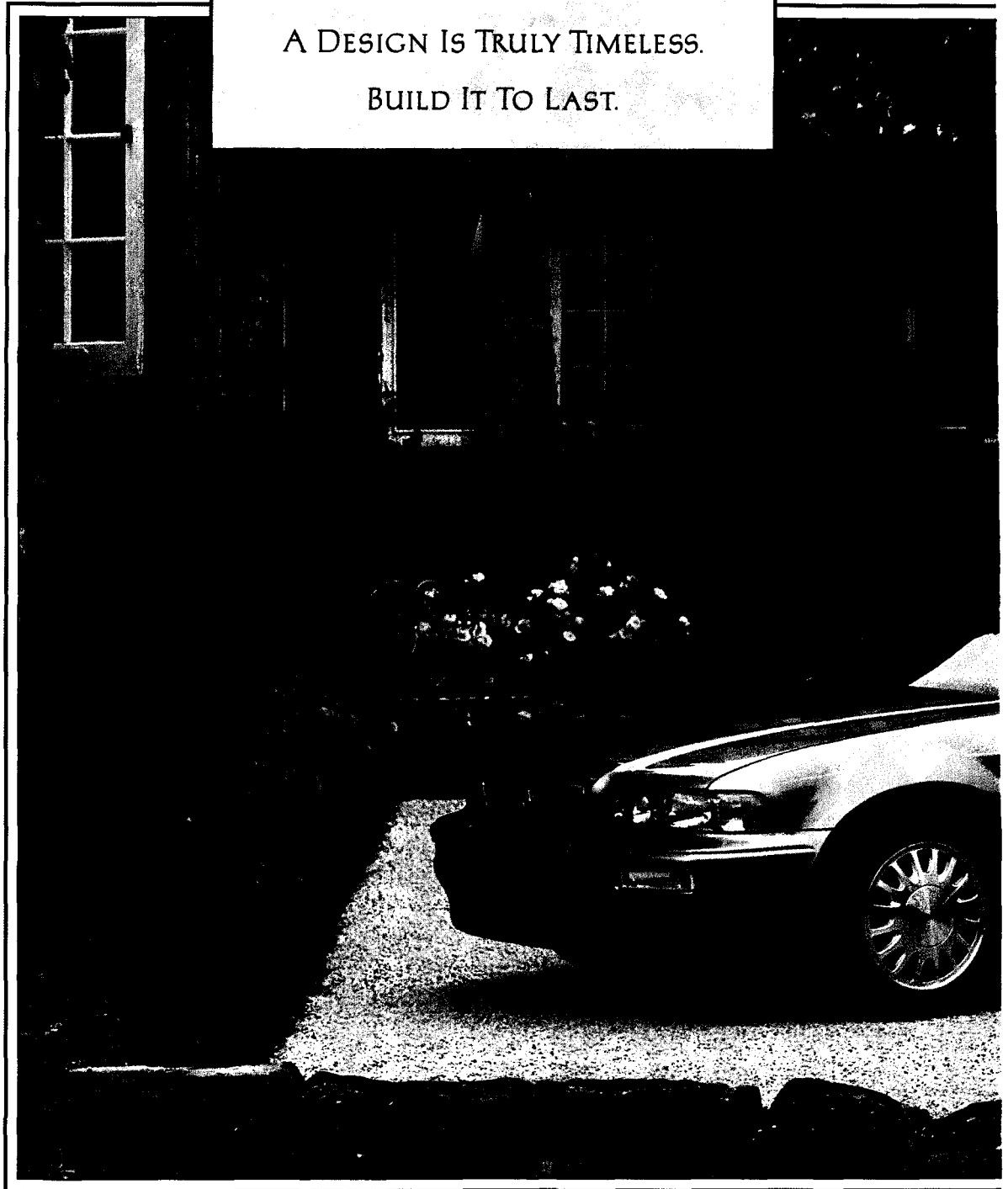
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Unreasonable Facsimile

Do we really want computers to be more like us?

IN 1950, in the optimistic early morning of the computer age, the British mathematician Alan Turing predicted that computers would become intelligent enough to pass for human beings in conversation. "I believe that in about fifty years' time it will be plausible . . . to make them play the imitation game so well that an average interrogator will not have more than a 70 percent chance of making the right identification after five minutes of questioning," he wrote. A field soon grew up to make his prediction come true, led by Marvin Minsky, who co-founded the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. For a while the possibilities seemed limitless. One MIT professor asserted that "a modern computer system . . . can be made to develop a sense of itself . . . a kind of self-consciousness." Another writer went so far as to warn, in a book titled *Machines Who Think*, that "there will be very little communication between machines and humans because unless the machines condescend to talk to us about something that interests us, we'll have no communication."

Today traditional artificial intelligence, or AI, is a backwater at best, and the confidence with which it was once pursued seems unimaginable. Nobody has ever designed a program that can converse at all convincingly on a single subject, and the field has splintered into disparate parts. People work to simulate bits of the neural networks that are the raw material of mind; they design robots to perform simple tasks involving vision and coordinated movement; they struggle to come up with useful language translators; they devise programs to digest medical diagnostic data and calculate suggested courses of treatment. The grand vision has nearly van-

ished. As one critic of the field wrote in 1984, "The world of artificial intelligence programs is populated by idiot savants and well-behaved children."

Still, there are diehards. A small group of them run the Loebner Prize Competition in Artificial Intelligence, which sponsors an actual Turing test, in which judges converse with computer terminals and then try to identify which have computers behind them and which have human confederates. I was one of the eight judges in the third Loebner contest, last December. I got to meet some of the best conversational AI programs existing, and I came away with the conviction that real humanlike artificial intelligence is not just far off but impossible—and that the goal is misguided and pointless anyway.

The eight judges gathered in a defense contractor's headquarters in San Diego (I had to sign a paper avowing my U.S. citizenship to be let in) and huddled in a room with eight computer terminals. Next to each terminal was a sign indicating a single topic for conversation, such as "Abortion" or "Baseball." We spent three hours taking turns at the terminals and then privately casting ballots on which were human and which were humanoid.

I began at "Pets." The conversation, with me going first, commenced as follows:

"Hello. What kind of pets do you have yourself?"

"I have two cats."

"What are their names?"

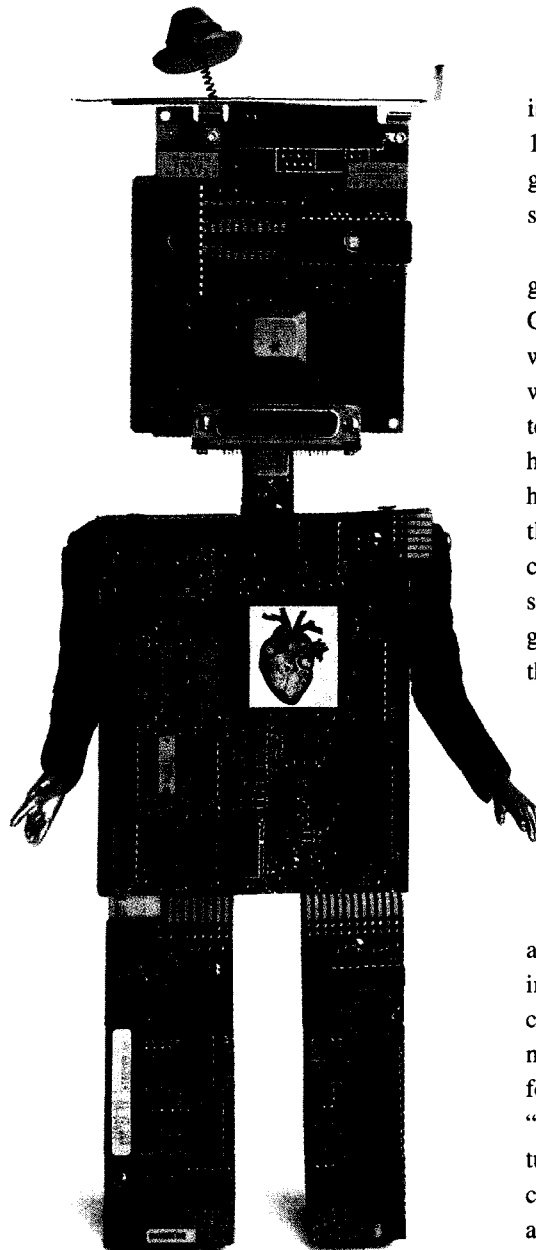
"My cats are called Spats and Bowtie."

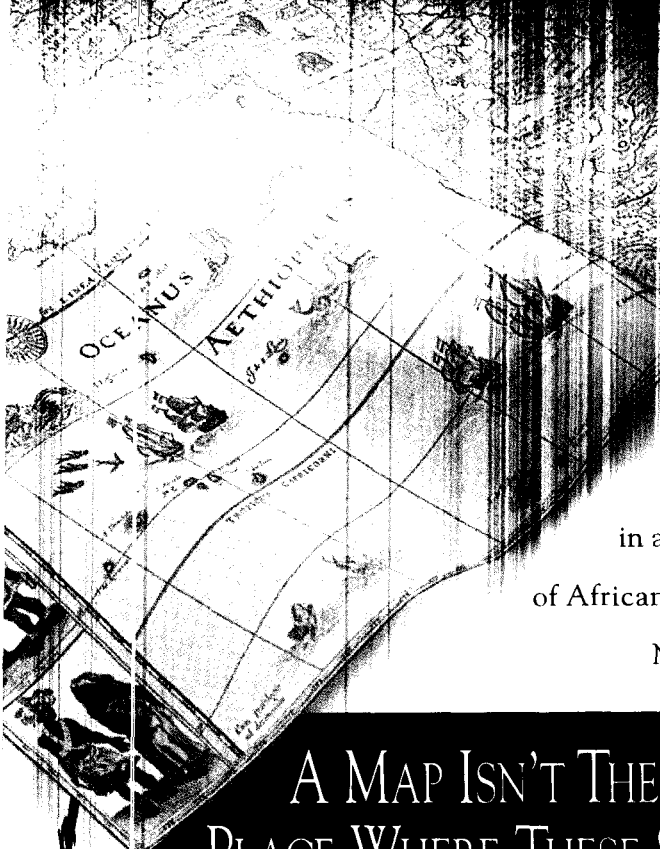
"How do you feel about declawing?"

"What kind of pets did you have as a child?"

"Won't you answer my question? How do you feel about declawing?"

by Frederick Allen





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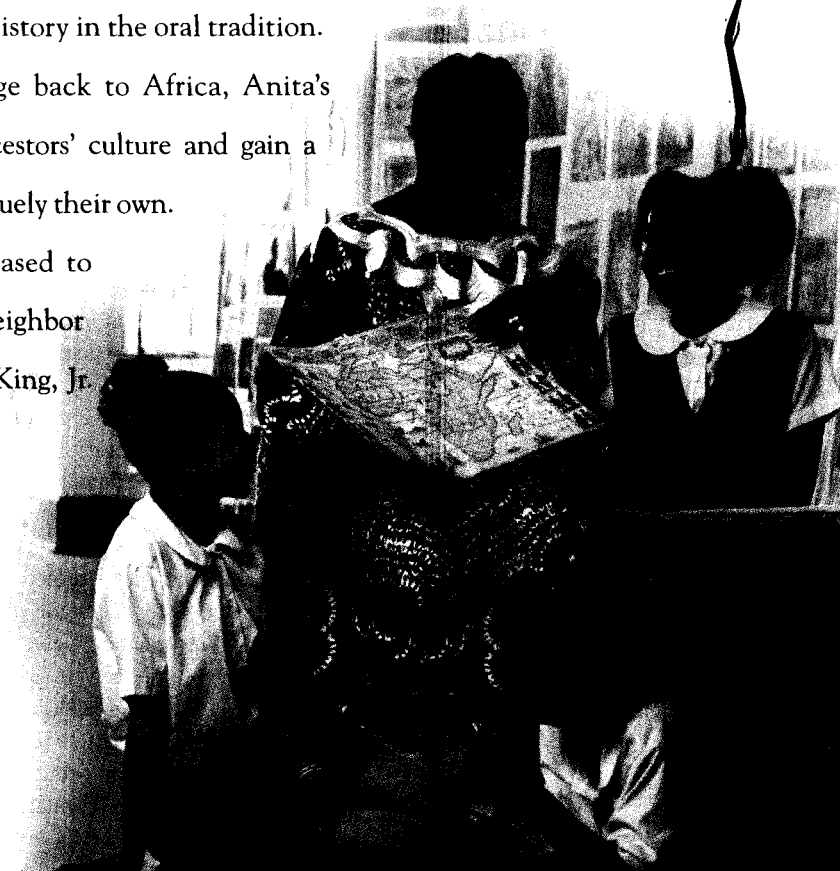
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♦ COMING SOON ON THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY ONLINE: Eric Schlosser, the author of "Reefer Madness," this month's cover story, will discuss medical, legal, and political aspects of the debate on marijuana. For the date and time of the event, please log on to America Online, type keyword: atlantic, and then click on the "Atlantic Auditorium" icon.

"Guinea pigs are about as smart as cucumbers."

It was clearly a program and already at sea. It never again attained the apparent coherence of its first two answers.

Next I went to "Baseball." That conversation started with my asking, "What team are you a fan of?"

"The Baltimore Orioles!" came the reply.

"Have you always been an Orioles fan?"

"I would like to say yes, but at one time when I was small I was a Tiger fan."

"Didn't what's-his-name Robinson play third base for the Orioles?"

"You have that right! The best ever to play 3rd base!!"

"What was his first name?"

"Brooks, of course!"

Now I was just as obviously talking to a human being—who, I soon learned, had played some minor-league ball himself. I could always tell instantly if a terminal had a program or a person behind it. There was no comparison. The programs were elaborate, digitized versions of the old Magic Eight Ball. They could look for a few key words and try to recognize very basic kinds of questions, but then all they could do was choose from a long list of prepared questions and answers.

As soon as we'd all had a turn at each terminal, we voted. Not one of the judges was fooled into thinking that any of the three computer programs was a human being, but five of my seven colleagues were fooled in the other direction, which wasn't supposed to happen at all. Each of them guessed that at least one of the five human confederates was in fact a computer program, even though the human beings had been instructed to act as honestly human as possible. The confederates had happened to be very humanly inarticulate and illogical. The judges had been too humanly eager to equate humanity with eloquence to recognize this.

The winner—the computer program we judged most nearly human, a more or less arbitrary choice—turned out to have been designed by the same person who had won the prize both years before. All three of the programs were hopeless at conversation. The winner, "Liberal or Conservative?," gave itself away by churning out non sequiturs and rote wisecracks about *Star Trek*. The runner-up, "Bad Marriage," had obviously been designed only to ask questions, not to answer them.

Because the contest has been so disappointing, the chairman of the prize committee, the Tufts University philosopher Daniel Dennett, who is the author of the popular *Consciousness Explained* (1991), sought to persuade the prize's benefactor, a New York businessman named Hugh Loebner, to cut it back at least to every two years. (Shortly after I judged the prize, Loebner said he could not, and three members of the prize committee quit.)

■ ■ ■

If the computer programs gave themselves away with their crudeness, the human beings gave themselves away too, I found—but not with sophistication so much as with simple humanness. People inevitably had distinct personalities that shone through fast and clear, even though we were conversing over computer terminals, about narrowly defined topics.

I quickly became aware that all the confederates' knowledge and how they expressed it must be tied up with their backgrounds, their moods, their reactions to being part of this test. The "Cooking" confederate told me, "My favorite cuisine is oriental food, but I am an excellent Mexican food cook." I asked how mole sauce is made, and she answered, "I've heard you use chocolate, and that sounds awful!" Then she remembered that she had made it once. I asked if she had ever made pad Thai, and she said, "No, what is that?" I mentioned that I am married to a professional gourmet cook; she was fas-

*Not one of us was
fooled into thinking
that any of the
computer programs was
a human being.*

cinated and a bit abashed: "Well, I am not a professional cook—I am self-taught. I had to teach myself because I was married at an early age and it was sink or swim."

Every conversation I had with a human confederate had a similar quality, and so I found myself wondering how anyone

could hope ever to teach a computer to converse in a way that would seem at all human. No machine could possibly pass for human without manifesting such a rich, vital context. As the contest made plain, being human isn't about knowledge and syntax—or if it is, it is about mysteriously accumulated, emotion-distorted, of-

*What good would a
computer be if it
could change its mind,
or get bored, or
forget?*

ten forgotten, confused knowledge, and how you got your knowledge and how you communicate it, which depends on whom you're communicating it to, and what kind of day you're having, and much more. Even the most mundane conversation has this kind of texture—and so, for that matter, does time spent in idleness without saying a word. This may be recognized more often by novelists and poets than by scientists. After all, Marcel Proust built literary immortality on knowing it, and more recently Nicholson Baker knew it well enough to set an entire novel, *The Mezzanine*, in a single silent escalator ride.

And so I came to suspect that the only truly believable computer program would be one able to ape life itself, since thinking as we know it exists only as a purposive tool of living organisms. And even if the thing were created, what purpose would it serve? We already have at our disposal the all-too-easy means for creating human beings with fully human brains and bodies. What's more, creating a human being (or its facsimile) means creating something passionate, demanding, selfish, neurotic, fallible, and often fog-bound. If it isn't, it will never pass.

Computers, it seems to me, are valuable exactly insofar as they are inhuman—they can do enormously complex calculations at lightning speed with no chance for error; they can contain volumes of information without forgetting or confusing it, and with immediate access to all of it; they can be emptied out and

refilled to tackle totally new problems with no preconceptions except those explicitly fed to them; and so on. Their great strength is their very lack of humanness. What good would a computer be at any of that if it had the power to change its mind, or get bored, or forget, or wonder?

One area of human intelligence that AI researchers have particularly wanted to simulate is our ability to associate—to retrieve appropriate but disparate memories and to think metaphorically. But isn't our genius for making farfetched associations also the source of many of our neuroses and prejudices and stupidities? The ingenious mind that foresaw an enormous market for automobiles and figured out how to meet that demand by reversing the concept behind the disassembly lines at meat-packing houses—the mind of Henry Ford—was also the anti-Semitic mind that blamed the Jews for the First World War and for a personal difficulty in dealing with investors.

So perhaps creating a program to pass a Turing test is both impossible in the conceivable future and futile. Perhaps there's no reason why anyone should want to create one. I asked Hugh Loebner about this. He is a dreamer who also envisions long-distance gravity railroads, but he is especially devoted to AI, which he concedes is an extremely long way from fulfilling its promise. When I asked him what one would do with a humanlike computer that had what I saw as crippling human weaknesses, he talked of "unstrapping" it from those human frailties when they got in the way. But that sounds an awful lot like backtracking toward a traditional computer.

Mightn't there be a more fundamental urge behind all this activity? The classicist J. David Bolter, who also has a degree in computer science, has pointed out in his book *Turing's Man* that "there was perhaps never a moment in the ancient or modern history of Europe when no one was pursuing the idea of making a human being by other than the ordinary reproductive means." That is to say, he adds, "the cultural equivalent of artificial intelligence can be found throughout the history of Western cultures." Is that what it's all about? Is the quest for AI really at heart an expression of that essential, timeless Promethean urge?

"Of course it is," Loebner said. "Of course." ☘

◆ MOMENTS FROM RECENT
LIVE CONFERENCES ON
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY
ONLINE:

I honestly believe that . . . the intelligence people know something about the flow of warheads and material out of Russia that they simply don't want us to know. They kept on telling me that there is no "evidence" of a warhead leaving Russia. My hunch is that we've already passed that point.

—SEYMOUR HERSH,
the author of *"The Wild East,"*
May 23, 1994

I happen to be a systematic hoarder of information. . . . If there's a report, for example, that the Japanese have just returned 20,000 three-hundred-year-old Korean noses to Korea, I will make a file for that . . . or it might [become] a subfile, under Exports, Japan.

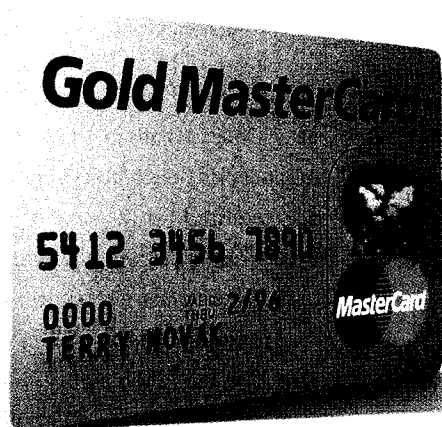
—CULLEN MURPHY,
The Atlantic's managing editor,
May 10, 1994

Karl Marx wrote in 1853 that despotism in the Orient was required for the sake of maintaining irrigation systems over large tracts of territory. . . . Ironically, Marx, who is so wrong in the 20th century, may turn out to be so right in the 21st.

—ROBERT D. KAPLAN,
the author of *"The Coming Anarchy,"* March 3, 1994

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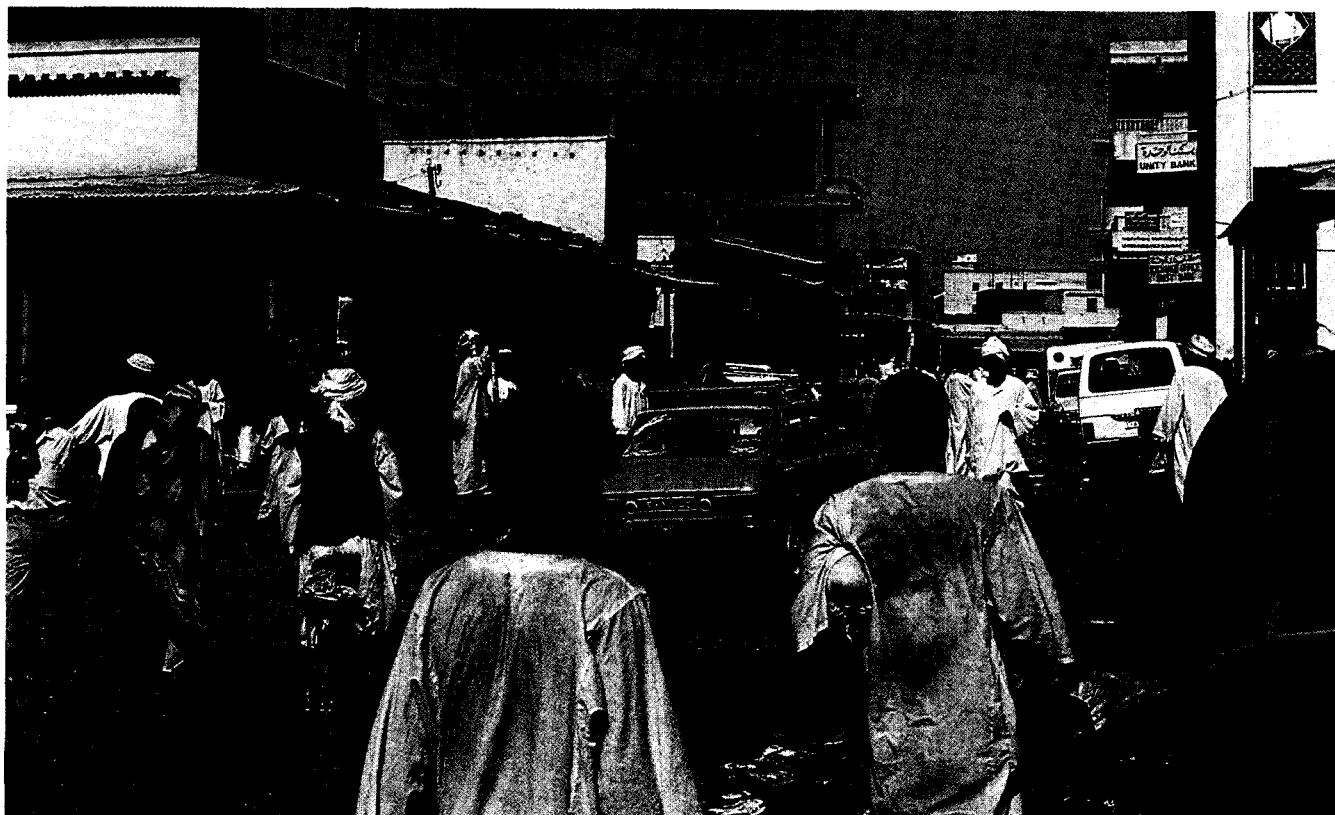


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Turabi's Law

It has been argued that Islamic radicalism may at least bring a form of peace to some of the world's most troubled nations. But the Islamic regime in Sudan has created a nightmare—one that may portend the real future of the Islamic world

KHARTOUM, the capital of Sudan, was built in splendor by the British at the confluence of the Blue and White Niles. It has changed since colonial times. I landed there in the heat and blackness of midnight, and shared the airport cab with an aging American who looked as if he

by William Langewiesche

had drifted too long. The cab was a listing Renault with a roof rack. The driver wore rags, and drove anxiously, leaning forward over the wheel. The nightly curfew was in effect, and armed soldiers loomed

out of the darkness at the intersections to check our identities. No one spoke. I guessed that the American was in sales—of what, I didn't ask. Sweat streamed down his face. We took him to the Hilton, near a bridge guarded by tanks. He argued with the driver over the fare, and then came up close to me and almost spat out his words: "You're gonna get ripped."

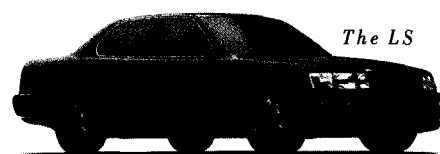
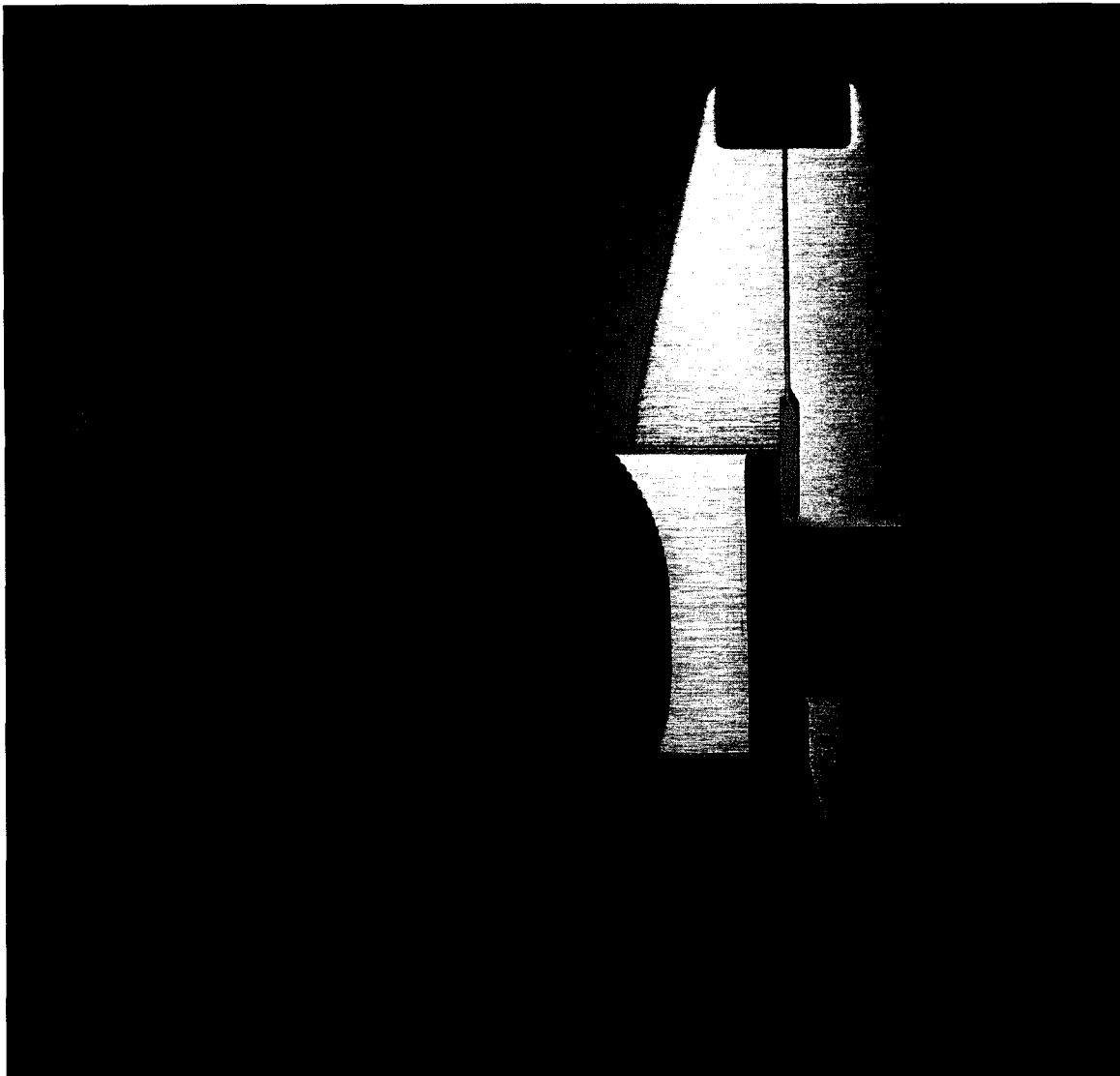
The cab carried me deeper into the city, through dark, deserted streets, past crumbling buildings and more soldiers. I

noticed a boarded-over flophouse, a dormant gas station, a refrigerator lying open amid the rubble. The place might have suffered artillery strikes, but had not; war has not visited Khartoum itself for a century. Under cover of the curfew, I knew, the secret police were out and about, making arrests. I had already heard about the so-called ghost houses into which their victims disappear, sometimes forever. The victims are those said to be enemies of the Islamic revolution that swept over Sudan in 1989, and that promised to bring good government, in the form of God, to this godforsaken nation.

Greater Khartoum is a dispersed conglomeration of about five million people. It sprawls for forty miles from desolate refugee camps on the southern outskirts, north past the airport and the city center, across the two Niles, and through the neighborhoods of Omdurman and North Khartoum. Diminished by its poverty, it never seems that large. Here and there office towers stand like rocks above the sea of crumbling concrete and adobe. The towers are designed for elevators and air-

Above: a street in Khartoum, stronghold of the Islamic revolution

Some people say we're too obsessed with a .00038" tolerance. (Or was it .00039"?)



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conditioners in a city subject to daily power outages.

Oil-rich Arabs are to blame for the towers. The British are harder to judge. The Sudanese blame them for the civil war that has pitted the successive governments of Khartoum against rebels in the south. That war has been fought most years since shortly before the British pulled out, in 1956. And it is true that the national borders as drawn by the British seem to invite trouble. They enclose the largest country in Africa and the Middle East, and one of the most hopeless. With a territory nearly a third the size of the United States, Sudan has practically no industry and few natural resources beyond river water and some untapped oil reserves. Poverty, famine, and sickness are endemic. Moreover, although Sudan is strongly Muslim, it is not uniformly so: a quarter of the Sudanese, who in total number about 25 million, are Christians or animists, and they show no desire to convert to Islam. The Muslims themselves are not uniformly sectarian. Sudan is further riven by ethnic loyalties (the country encompasses some 500 ethnic groups) and loyalties to region and to tribe. This diversity lies behind the civil war, which in recent years has driven perhaps a million non-Muslim refugees from the southern war zone into the tattered camps in and around Khartoum, in the north. Their suffering is not new. War has been a fact of life in Sudan for centuries. The British were naive to believe they could impose standards of fair play on that troubled land.

But the British deserve credit for what they did achieve. Beyond Khartoum, they built the roads, railroads, and irrigation

canals that continue magically to support the city. And at least their administration buildings were functional. Britain's neo-classical and stolid brick structures still house government ministries along the tree-lined banks of the Blue Nile.

TODAY those ministries are controlled by revolutionaries—radical Muslims who have instituted a vigorous and ideological government based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. They are of course part of the much larger revival sweeping the Muslim world. Scorned as “fundamentalists” by their opponents, the Sudanese leaders prefer a less loaded label—they call themselves “Islamists.” Since coming to power, in 1989, they have turned their nation into the second radical Islamic state, after Iran. Their success in attaining power has had compelling effects on all of North Africa and much of the Middle East, where many countries teeter on the brink of their own Islamic revolutions. This has disturbed the West. The United States has been angered in particular by Sudan's foreign policy—by its encouragement of revolutionaries beyond its borders, its close friendship with Iran, and the help it gives to Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and other international terrorist groups, whose warriors are said to train on Sudanese soil. The U. S. government, which had already led a campaign to cut off financial assistance to Sudan, last year added the country to its list of terrorist nations.

But terrorism is not the important story in Khartoum. In fact, the issue of terrorism—immediate though it seems—may deflect one from the task of contemplating the character of the broader Islamic revolution. Fifteen years after the fall of the Shah the revolution has spread beyond

the Shiites of Iran, transformed itself, and gathered force among the Sunnis, who constitute 90 percent of the world's Muslims. It holds out the hope, its apologists say, of establishing forms of authority based on a conception of life uniquely adapted to some of the most dissatisfied and un-

*The civil war rages, the
secret police operate
without restriction, the
press is censored, the
military reigns*

governable places in the world. The movement seems to be shaping up as one of the great political upheavals of our century, and maybe of the next.

The revolution is still young and disorganized. It includes a bewildering array of political strategies and religious beliefs. This is hardly surprising: there are nearly a billion Muslims in the world, and they are anything but homogeneous. Militant Islamists quarrel constantly over what constitutes the “true” Islam, an especially self-righteous debate that darkens their future with the possibility of internecine war. Nonetheless, their differences may be less important than they once were. A remarkable characteristic of this revolution is its continuing appeal *throughout* the Muslim world. Islamists share the confidence of battle. More important, they believe in a common destination—a society under the just rule of God. And many of them believe they have a powerful tool to work with. It is the ancient system of Islamic law, greatly revitalized, called the shari'a.

In its widest definition “shari'a” means “the path to the watering place.” In its narrower definition it means “Islamic jurisprudence,” an accumulation of laws and procedures based on the Koran and on knowledge of Muhammad's ways, as interpreted by classical schools of legal thought. The two definitions—the religious path and the law—are in fact the same. Because Islam considers God to be everywhere, it does not separate religion from government. This means that the shari'a cannot distinguish between sin and civil infraction. But this legal philosophy is not as primitive as it sometimes looks. The shari'a recognizes that most sins are trivial. And although it includes harsh punishments such as flogging, amputation, and stoning to death, it also includes safeguards for the accused, at least in theory. In any event, the Islamists who came

A man stands in prayer at one of Khartoum's larger mosques



to power have tried to use the shari'a beyond crime and punishment, as a blueprint for a just and harmonious society.

Five years after the revolution in Sudan the Islamists have brought about almost the exact opposite of what, to judge from their prior writings, they intended. The civil war rages, the secret police operate without restriction, the press is censored, the military reigns, and political opponents of the Islamists and the military languish in ghost houses when they are not simply killed. It is true that life has never been easy in Sudan, and it would have been unrealistic to have expected any ideology to save the Sudanese from themselves. But by most measures—and especially by the measure of political oppression—Sudan is worse off as an Islamic state than it was before. That would be easier to understand if the Islamist leaders were—like others within the revolution—simple authoritarians, believing in the rule of the sword. That has been the way of strong Muslim rulers of the past. To some extent it is the way of Iran today. But the leaders of Sudan presented themselves as something new. Though fervent Muslims, they are not clerics. They think of themselves as progressives, which within the context of Islamic tradition they indeed are. Their idealism is, in a perverse way, what makes Sudan so interesting. Like so many would-be reformers in other places and other times, the professors proposed enlightenment but delivered a nightmare. Sudan today offers a glimpse of what the future may hold for other Islamic countries that pursue a radical Muslim dream. It is a leading example of the capacity of Islamic revolution to thwart its own ambitions.

KHARTOUM University is the seat of Sudan's Islamist revolution. It was built by the British, and originally named Gordon Memorial College, after Charles "Chinese" Gordon, a general who was speared and decapitated by rebellious Sudanese shortly before dawn on January 26, 1885. For most of the nineteenth century Sudan had been subject to military rule by Egypt, which in turn was gradually becoming a British holding. Gordon was a famous troubleshooter who had once served on loan to Egypt as the governor of Sudan, and who was sent back to Khartoum to organize an orderly retreat in the face of overwhelming rebel forces. Instead he organized Khartoum's defense,



which failed after about a year. The victorious Sudanese had risen under a Muslim messiah, the Mahdi, who now moved across the river and built a new Islamic capital, at Omdurman. The Mahdi died soon afterward, but his Islamic nation lived on for thirteen years, until British and Egyptian troops returned and defeated it bloodily in September of 1898.

The British were conscientious administrators as well as good soldiers, and among the elites of Khartoum they gained admirers by their sincere efforts to improve the country. The pride of their colonial government was the founding of the brick college on the banks of the Blue Nile. After national independence, in 1956, the renamed college became a hotbed of Sudanese politics. On campus and in government the "graduate constituencies" argued earnestly. Their debates had an ineffectual quality that sympathetic outsiders regularly confused with gentleness.

That was the world of young Hassan al-Turabi. Today, at age sixty-one, he is the power behind Sudan's Islamist regime. A small man with a gray beard and a thin, boyish face, Turabi wears a turban and the whitest robes I have ever seen. His shoes are unstained by the streets—no mean feat

Hassan al-Turabi, the power behind the revolution

for anyone in Khartoum. The white Mercedes in which he gets around the city is equally spotless.

I have heard Turabi called the Madison Avenue ayatollah, because he has slick manners and obvious problems with credibility. At a 1992 discussion with scholars in Florida, he countered reports of torture in Sudan—widely confirmed by human-rights groups—by saying, among other things, that the Sudanese are by nature sensitive, and therefore prone to overreact to late-night interviews under the glare of strong lights. During two conversations I had with him Turabi spoke smoothly of Sudan's opposition to terrorism. He also denied that he played any role in government. His assertions were strangely transparent, as if he did not expect me to believe them, but needed somehow to reassure himself.

Nonetheless, Turabi is a person of substance. A legal scholar with advanced degrees from London and Paris, he has served as Sudan's Attorney General and as the dean of the law school at Khartoum University. He is a devoted revolu-

Watergate

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7

MONDAY, AUGUST 8

TUESDAY, AUGUST 9

11 PM
4. Assassination
Why did Nixon think he could challenge the Supreme Court? What did he hope to gain by firing every key prosecutor that might indict him?

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10

10 PM
ET/PT
5. Impeachment
Why did Nixon suddenly surrender? What made him think he would escape criminal charges if he left the White House?



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tionary, but one who is more interested in the social effects of Islam than in its strictly spiritual aspects. In Islamist terms he is a believer in not being held to interpretations of Islamic law that are too literal-minded or old-fashioned.

A BIT of theory is necessary. Muhammad, who lived about 600 years after Jesus, was a reformer of law and faith. By discouraging clerical hierarchies, he founded a government and religion based on personal and direct devotion to God.

But rather than accepting his invitation to contemplation and flexibility, his followers retreated into dogma. This began to happen soon after his death, and was tied in to leadership struggles. It was formalized 300 years later, in the tenth century, when the Sunni Muslims and some Shiite Muslims declared the period of *ijtihad* to be closed. "*Ijtihad*" is an important word: it means the interpretation of the Prophet's laws to encompass issues not discussed directly in the traditional sources—ranging from the most personal questions of faith to more public questions of government and law. Muhammad specifically encouraged *ijtihad*. When his followers declared it closed, they meant not only that the shari'a was complete but also that individuals should have no thoughts of their own. They condemned Muslims to a thousand years of literalness.

It is the issue of reopening *ijtihad* that has animated many modern Islamist intellectuals and clerics. It is no coincidence that an Islamic revolution first occurred in Iran, where *ijtihad* was a principle that had been kept alive by Shiites. It is a principle that Turabi, a Sunni Muslim, has long espoused. Whether in economics, education, or political thinking, Turabi argues, the need for change is obvious. In Muslim lands the Western model of secular government has produced some modern downtowns and highways, but otherwise mostly dictatorship and misery. The Sudanese couch their rhetoric in a wistful idealization of the past, because their tradition requires it. But what has actually seemed to inspire them is the chance to rework society along new lines. In theory, as expressed in Islamist writings, these new lines include modern egalitarian concepts of individual dignity and worth and human rights. *Ijtihad* is the tool that allows the Islamists to dis-

cover these principles within their own faith, rather than borrowing them from abroad.

Because of the importance of the Sudanese experiment in Islamic eyes, Turabi has become perhaps the most influential Islamist in the world. Visiting Islamists wait to see him in an enclosed veranda that leads to his office. There are no obvious security precautions. Turabi was once assaulted and nearly killed, but that was in Canada. In Khartoum an attacker would have nowhere to run.

People who have known Turabi since he was young, and who themselves have lived through the frustrations of the post-colonial period of Sudanese history, say they are not surprised by his rise. Turabi was the brilliant son of a religious leader from an eastern province. He came to Khartoum in 1951, as a young man, to study law.

While his fellow students espoused Western solutions to Sudan's problems—Marxism, socialism, liberal democracy—Turabi joined a small and powerless group called the Muslim Brotherhood. After graduating from law school he spent the better part of a decade studying in Europe, and upon his return he took control of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Sudan was by then eight years into independence, and already terribly troubled. Though plaintive, the explanation of Abdelwahab El-Affendi, a Sudanese Islamist, is succinct: "The alternatives being peddled to the Islamic world view . . . were no more than second-hand second-rate misunderstandings of ideologies that were in themselves flawed." The same might be argued about the Islamist ideology today, but by the time of the 1989 military coup that brought Turabi and the Islamists to power, the Sudanese were torn inside and too tired to argue.

The details bear some sorting out. Islamic law in a modern politicized form actually came to Sudan in September of 1983, before the Islamist coup, when the long-standing dictator Jaafar Nimeiri introduced a new shari'a-based penal code. Nimeiri wanted to hang on to power and stamp out crime. At first the citizens of Khartoum turned out by the thousands to enjoy the spectacle of Islamic discipline. The shari'a sharply reduced crime, but then metamorphosed into political terror. To enforce the code, Nimeiri established summary courts that held ten-minute tri-

als and dispensed thousands of punishments, including floggings, amputations, and executions. Amputees from those years are a common sight on the streets of Khartoum.

This was hardly justice as the Islamists envisioned it, but they were willing to compromise. To his discredit, Turabi supported the new laws, and openly turned against the abuse only at the very end, after Nimeiri ordered his arrest. Nimeiri was overthrown in 1985, and after a short period of military rule Sudan passed through a few years of real but ineffective democracy. Islamic punishments were suspended, though Nimeiri's "September Laws" remained on the books, because by then it would have been politically impossible to get rid of them. Khartoum was caught in the larger currents of the Middle East, and by popular sentiment was becoming more devout.

The army officers who seized control in 1989 were themselves radicalized Muslims. They were headed by Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who, as the head of a junta called the

Revolutionary Command Council, remains formally in charge today. Soon after the coup the junta quietly handed power to Turabi and his Islamist brethren in the National Islamic Front, a political group that had grown out of the Muslim Brotherhood. This was done by turning to Turabi for guidance, and inviting his operatives to infiltrate the civil bureaucracy and the military—creating, in effect, a shadow government. Early in 1991 the government of Sudan instituted a new criminal code that revitalized the shari'a. Turabi himself, despite his obvious authority, remains in what might be called the foreground of the background.

This state of affairs has led to ambiguity about who is really in charge—the military strongmen, who are increasingly reviled for their bloody ways, or their brainier friends outside the army, the Islamist intellectuals led by Turabi. The situation is often as unclear to the players as it is to the spectators. Factions shift within factions, and each requires the others to define itself. The disarray is useful to Turabi. It allows him to duck responsibility and claim credit as needed.

THAT Turabi can sometimes duck responsibility is no doubt a tactical convenience. That he often needs to, however, points up a profound problem within the Islamist regime itself. It is simply this: there is no imaginable scheme by which the new and enlightened shari'a can function as a universal and stabilizing legal system in a country as fragmented as Sudan.

This is so whether or not one accepts Turabi and the Islamists at face value—accepts them, that is, as sincere idealists. To accept them at face value, one must understand that those, like Turabi, who would return to the path of Muhammad by reopening *ijtihad* seek also to conform to the Islamic ideal in another matter: its tolerance. Islam intends to be respectful of certain other beliefs. This tolerance means that in an Islamic nation that takes itself seriously as such, each tolerated religious community must be allowed to live by its own laws. In a nation like Sudan, where God appears to people in widely different ways, this raises insurmountable obstacles to the universal applicability of Islamic law.

Watergate

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Women in Khartoum wearing the traditional tobe

Even if this were not the case, the fact is that there are many who resent and bitterly oppose Turabi's shari'a—not only among the Christians and animists in the south or in the growing refugee camps around Khartoum but also in the Muslim sects and among the large number of faithful Muslims who would prefer to see Sudan become a secular state. Whether because it is self-limiting in theory or because it is divisive in practice, the shari'a is hardly a system of legal authority that can unite a heterogeneous and quarrelsome nation. And whether for the one reason or the other, a large portion of Sudan is effectively exempted from, or resistant to, the shari'a.

And so one faces a situation where governance, such as it is in Sudan, exists on two planes. There is the public plane: The Islamists have established shari'a courts and staffed them with ideologues who stick to the letter and spirit of the law. Shari'a courts duly handle certain classes of infractions, and those who come under their jurisdiction find themselves living in a fundamentalist Muslim state. I have heard of cases in which, true to the ideal of tolerance, Christians who have landed in shari'a court for violations of Islamic strictures have found themselves exonerated.

And then there is the not-so-public plane, which consists of the military, and the secret police forces, and other groups acting with or without the direct knowledge of Turabi or the military leaders, who fill the vacuum left by the inadequacy of civil government with a regime of continual terror. Opponents of the military do not find their way into shari'a courts. They are taken out and shot.

How do the two planes coexist? There is, I believe, a deep psychological process at work in Sudan, in which the state-directed terror is not acknowledged philosophically by many of the Islamist intellectuals—not to the outside world, and perhaps not in any fundamental sense to themselves.

As noted, there hangs about Turabi himself an atmosphere of reflexive denial. Rather than overtly plotting the political terror, the Islamists turn their backs on it, and let it happen as a matter of distasteful necessity in revolutionary times.

Not all the Sudanese Islamists, of course, bother to pay even lip service to tolerance. Hard-liners within the National Islamic Front tell Turabi that compromise with non-Muslims must be for outside consumption only, that he must win the war in the south and then impose Islamic standards—if not Islam itself—on everyone. Turabi surely understands their argument. If he does not impose the shari'a on everyone, the Islamic revolution will flounder. But if he does impose the shari'a on everyone, the Sudanese revolution will lose whatever it has of a soul. So Turabi wavers, and dreams beyond the nation—dreams the old dream, of a pan-Islamic movement that might someday sweep the world.

THE enemies of the revolution should take no pleasure in the shari'a's inherent weakness. As they applaud the concessions made to certain non-Muslims and summon international pressure to limit the more corporal of the Islamic punishments, they must also face the other half of the equation—that outside the realm of the shari'a system, extralegal punishments have proliferated. The secret police pervade Khartoum.

As Turabi admits, prisoners of the secret police have been interviewed under strong lights. They have also been whipped, sliced, burned, clubbed, shackled and hung by their wrists or ankles, mutilated, blinded, shocked, and starved. They have been deprived of light, space, water, medicine, and sleep. They have

been lowered into deep wells poisoned with animal carcasses. They have been subjected to mock executions. The horrors are reported to be more common in the provincial cities, some of which I visited, where zealous authorities can operate out of the view of anyone in the capital who might be inclined to scold them. In the western mountains and in the south, where the shari'a does not pretend to apply, there is effectively no law but war. The victims in the battle zones are rebel soldiers and spies, and their families, and people who are known to them or who might be.

In Khartoum the victims are all criminals and rabble-rousers, real and imagined. It is probably inevitable that the university has been a special target for the government's anger. When students marched in 1992 against the rising cost of education, soldiers moved onto the campus, shot several demonstrators, arrested others, and closed the school for the rest of the year. Department heads have been purged, Islamist stalwarts promoted, and professors intimidated. At the department of political science, when I asked one academic about opposition to the regime, he looked frightened and would give no answer except "We teach the curriculum."

In another office an important Islamist was only too glad to talk. He was young, slight, and so soft-spoken that at times I could not hear him. I was interested because he was once known as a moderate, and probably still thought of himself as one. We discussed restaurants in Princeton, New Jersey, where he had been in school. Mostly, though, I listened to him talk politics. His subject was the Foreign Ministry, but it could as well have been the university, or Khartoum, or the nation at large. He said, "The Islamists discovered that taking power and placing a few people is not enough. The diplomats at the ministry were brought up in the Western way, and they do not always defend Sudan as they should. As an Islamist, you have a dif-

*The shari'a is hardly
a system of legal
authority for uniting a
heterogeneous and
quarrelsome nation.*

ferent view of national interests. You would love to win over the diplomats, and re-educate them without losing their expertise. You would love to inject them with your own views, but this is very difficult."

And so you apply a little force.

During my stay I spoke often to dissident students, singly and in groups. They sought me out on the campus and found me at the cafeterias that serve soft drinks by the Blue Nile, and in the courtyards, and on the open pathways where they could see others who approached. They complained about discrimination, intimidation, censorship, and hypocritical government. They complained about their poverty and their future. Some were Catholics or Copts, but most were sincere Muslims. And yet, rather than rejecting the Islamist creed, many had plunged deeper into it. And why not? Trapped like prisoners from birth, they sought solace and meaning in their faith. They reminded me of a man I had seen sitting on the street by the Ministry of Justice. He was emaciated and obviously very ill. As I passed, he looked up and said, "Hello, I'm fine." He wore Muslim dress, and held a small Koran in his hands. His only solace was that his faith was still strong.

CRIPPLED no less by their apparent capacity for self-deception than by the shari'a, those in power who can be described as idealists are still trying to build an Islamic democracy. Their attempts at devising a system of public participation amid the prevailing horror of oppression are as ambitious as they are unrelentingly pathetic.

The officer charged with designing a new Sudanese governmental structure—one that might somehow accommodate the country's fractious elements—is Brigadier General Hassan Hamadain, a heavy man in a green uniform with stars on his shoulders. He had a furrowed brow, and an uncertain manner that I found endearing. We talked in his uncluttered pine-paneled office, which he wanted me to see. With no apparent irony he said, "In Sudan we are very sensitive to dictatorships, and we try to avoid them."

He later said, "All political systems known to the world have been implemented in Sudan, and they have all failed to provide stability." By this he meant multi-party and one-party systems. The solution, to be contained within a federal structure,

will allow no parties at all. It will consist of an ornate arrangement of "cascading congresses," through which power will flow upward from neighborhood and village committees, through state and national assemblies, to, finally, the presidency itself.

Having assured me that this scheme will answer Islam's twin requirements of consultation and consensus, the general launched into the details, reading haltingly from notes that he seemed to have stayed up late preparing. He had a telescoping pointer with which he occasionally directed my attention to a colored flow chart on the wall. Here in Khartoum, where the real power structure is intentionally ill-defined, his chart seemed outlandish. But I think he had convinced himself. He had the willingness of a student assigned the project of dreaming up a government.

Afterward I asked, "How do you keep your utopia from turning into a nightmare? In Libya the neighborhood committees have been turned around and used for control."

He looked wounded. "We are trying to give people a free hand to build social institutions in all areas."

"How can you do that and ban parties simultaneously?"

He searched through his notes. "Parties are vehicles of modern institutions. Sudan is a traditional society."

"Even so, by banning parties you don't solve the problem of the tribes and religious sects."

"You're right. We need time to eliminate this problem."

I asked him how that would be done, and how much time. He did not know. I remembered the Attorney General, a sinister man who, when asked about the consequences of the shari'a's not being applied to some non-Muslims, answered, "Yes, I'm thinking about setting up a committee to look into it."

THE importance of Sudan is not Sudan. Before giving his life there a century ago, Charles Gordon wrote, "What a useless possession is this land!" Hassan al-



The Tomb of the Mahdi, Sudan's nineteenth-century messiah

Turabi may find it so as well. Gone already are the fond days of abstraction. Sudanese Islamists now scramble to distance themselves from the increasingly unpopular military junta that gave them power. But even if they survive its eventual downfall, their movement will take turns they can neither predict nor follow. Islamic revolution is not the monolithic thing of the popular imagination. Its glory will pass on—to Algeria, perhaps, or Egypt—leaving Sudan to poverty and division. Turabi is an observant man and a student of history. As a Muslim, he has to accept the frustrations of his fate: to have been born ambitious and idealistic—and Sudanese. Perhaps in his most private thoughts he knows already that he will die disillusioned. There will be no reforming of distant lands, let alone his own.

This much is clear: the Islamic revolution is caught in a dilemma. If it is to deliver genuine solutions, it will have somehow to abandon the cynical pursuit of power that has characterized Muslim politics for centuries. But if, instead, in the pursuit of *ijtihad* and modern forms of justice, the revolution returns to purer principles of Islam, it may find impossible standards there. That is the lesson of Sudan. No one has yet shown that the modern Islamist creed is an ideology suited to governing.

Foreign Islamists still travel to Khartoum for inspiration, but as they ponder their struggles at home, the sight of what has happened in Sudan must occasion in them a feeling of dread. As they, and we, watch the green flag of Islam spread across the map, one thought should be uppermost: It is one thing to win power, and quite another to wield it. ☼



A pragmatic and aesthetic use of underground space: the University of Michigan's law library

Notes From the Underground

Building beneath the earth's surface makes increasing sense—and could become surprisingly affordable in the years ahead

IN 1901 H. G. Wells, then full into his stride as the premier science-fiction writer of his time, published a novel describing an expedition to the moon. When the explorers land, they discover that our satellite is honeycombed with underground cities. One of the party is captured and taken beneath the surface

by Fred Hapgood

to the chief of the moon men, who asks what uses earth people have found for the interior of their planet. Virtually none, the explorer replies. At this point the interview collapses: the Grand Lunar and his court are incredulous that any people could go off traveling to other planets while their relationship with their

own remained—literally—so superficial.

Though relatively little has changed in this respect since Wells wrote, a growing number of people today share the Grand Lunar's perspective: engineering geologists, civil engineers, architects, equipment designers, and contractors who, when they look down, see a whole new niche for the human race. As Gary Brierley, the president of the American Underground-Space Association, has observed, the underground-construction industry does more than just produce new real estate. It offers an altogether new kind of development medium: quiet, earthquake-resistant, weatherproof, secure, and energy-efficient, with virtually no constraints of geometry, scale, or location, and perfectly compatible with conservationist and preservationist values, no matter how strictly construed.

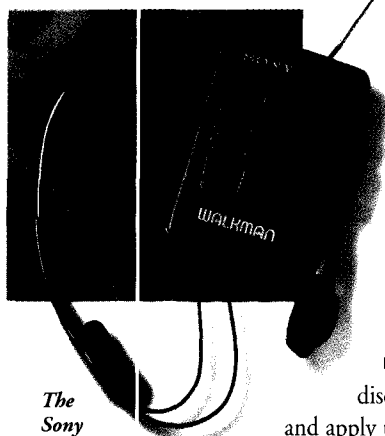
Clearly, some customers agree. Underground highways are being built or planned in Boston, Singapore, Stockholm, and Tokyo. The European Union is planning dozens of miles of tunnels to accommodate its high-speed rail system. Underground parking garages are, of course, ubiquitous. And over the past decade or so hundreds of laboratories, libraries, restaurants, shopping centers, offices, sports complexes, community and cultural centers, transportation centers, and industrial facilities (such as storage areas and waste-treatment plants) have been built underground, primarily in Europe and the Pacific Rim countries. Examples include facilities for last winter's Olympics, in Lillehammer, Norway; the Les Halles development, in Paris; the Toronto, Montreal, and Atlanta underground shopping districts; the tunnels for the late Superconducting Supercollider, in Waxahachie, Texas; the Seattle bus tunnel; the new wing of the Smithsonian museum; and the Moscone Convention Center, in San Francisco. And beyond these fairly traditional uses of underground space lie such dramatic possibilities as using tunnels for freight distribution in cities (thereby keeping trucks out of traffic), connecting cities with super-

Timothy Hursley, photographer/Gunnar Birkerts, architect

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sonic trains (sometimes called the planetary subway), and starting a systematic program of habitat restoration by zoning the underground for industrial, commercial, and transport infrastructure.

The rhetoric of enthusiasts sometimes suggests that all that is preventing our wholehearted embrace of the underground option is lack of "commitment," but a more concrete factor is also at play: costs. The first 4.4 miles of the Los Angeles subway cost more than a billion dollars; the thirty-five lane-miles now being built under Boston in its Central Artery project are expected to cost \$8 billion; the Swiss voted not long ago to commit more than \$10 billion for about fifty miles of railway tunnels; and the costs of the Chunnel linking France and England have exceeded \$15 billion. Nonetheless, prices used to be even higher. Tunneling bids have fallen to historic lows, and there are reasons to suspect that prices will continue to fall for a long time. If they do, the consequences for city planning, energy use, transportation, the urban landscape, and the environment could be profound.

THE high costs of underground work are often perceived as inherent to the medium, but what they really reflect is the extremely low degree of automation in the industry. Until very recently miners, as tunnel workers call themselves, worked right up against the face, drilling holes, filling them with explosives, blowing the charges, shoving support beams under the new ceiling created by the blast, and shoveling the shattered fragments into "muck cars" for extraction. (I will focus my discussion on hard-rock excavation, since bedrock has much greater long-term potential than soil has, but the same points could be made with examples from the tools and protocols of tunneling through soil or sand.) In the sixteenth century silver was mined from Europe's Erzgebirge Mountains in much the same way.

Part of the problem is that the underground environment is dirty, wet, and cramped, and therefore requires a technology different from surface construction: you can't take a bulldozer underground. The other part is that until recently the market for underground space was too small and episodic to pay for the development of that technology. Engineers have been talking about mechanizing hardrock

tunneling since at least the middle of the nineteenth century, but the first chance they had to do so arrived only in the last third of this century, when a flurry of sewer and subway orders allowed The Robbins Company, of Kent, Washington, to pursue the development of the hardrock power shovel: the tunnel boring machine, or TBM.

TBMs operate on the same principle as glass cutters: they push tough metal discs, or cutter wheels, into the rock until it starts to splinter, and then roll the wheels around in a circle, shattering successive layers of fragments off the working face. The first effective TBMs, which appeared in the 1960s, worked only in soft, homogeneous rock and under the driest conditions, and could cut only along roughly straight lines. Robbins has never been a large company—it has made a total of 180 TBMs—but it has found enough customers to keep its engineers busy. Today, after thirty years of development, it makes true general-purpose excavators: machines that can cut through the hardest rock, work under high water pressures, travel up or down at very steep angles, and run in circular or spiral paths.

The great virtue of the TBM is that it breaks rock in predictable patterns, as explosives do not. This higher degree of control permits more energy to be directed to the face, which means that work proceeds more quickly. A good rate for "drill and blast" might be twenty-five or fifty feet a day; TBMs commonly roll along at 100 feet a day, and twice that is not unusual. The contractors digging the tunnels for the Superconducting Supercollider worked at an average rate of 400 feet a day, with occasional bursts of up to 500 feet a day—a rate that, if sustained, would have produced a mile of tunnel every ten days or so.

Partly because most of the costs of underground work (labor, rentals, interest charges) are time-sensitive, contractors with TBMs have been able to underbid drill-and-blast contractors. The old order put up a fight but the machines prevailed, and over the 1980s the cost of tunneling fell by half. Gary Brierley offers the following example: in 1990 a TBM was used to dig a large tunnel under the St. Lawrence River in fifteen months for \$20.5 million (Canadian); ten years earlier another tunnel, of the same size and in the same geology, dug with drill and

blast, had taken twenty-four months and (assuming a correction of five percent a year for inflation) cost \$38.5 million.

The TBM took underground development over the threshold of mechanization, but the industry is still basically a handicraft business, and is priced accordingly. (Boston's Central Artery project is consuming nearly 75,000 man-years of labor, according to a 1990 report.) Nonetheless, demand for underground construction has been rising, driven partly by the relentless increase in real-estate costs and a growing emphasis on conservationist and preservationist values, especially in Europe. "European authorities tell me the public tolerance for putting things on the surface has fallen so low," says Ray Sterling, the director of the Underground Space Center at the University of Minnesota, and a co-author of *Underground Space Design*, "that increasingly the test of whether something gets built at all is whether it can be put underground." Sterling spoke to me from an office seven stories beneath the Minnesota winter.

There is some evidence that this bounce in market activity is spurring a second round of automation. More and more contractors have replaced the old trains of muck cars with linked systems of horizontal and vertical high-speed conveyors. These are not cheap machines—they must be able to carry hundreds of thousands of tons of rock over distances of several miles without a significant failure for months or even years—but they can clear rock from a site faster than any TBM can cut it, which removes one of the longstanding limitations on TBM performance. They make sense for contractors in a position to amortize their purchase over many projects.

Other technological innovations are following. Robbins has recently announced a new line of machines that can excavate noncylindrical spaces, such as horseshoe tunnels or arches or hemispheric chambers. The French contractor Perforex has been attracting attention with a new tunneling method, in which a slot of the desired shape is sawed in rock and filled with a tough concrete or grout. The rock inside the shape described is blown away by small, controlled charges; the concrete or grout prevents the blast from damaging the ambient rock. The cost of "mechanical pre-cutting tunneling," as this approach is called, can be as low as one tenth that of

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tunneling with a TBM, according to a civil engineer consulting to Perforex, and the technique has the added advantage of allowing excavation in nonstandard shapes. It was used recently near Grenoble to dig a tunnel forty feet in diameter—a dimension that would have been enormously expensive with a TBM. So far it works well only in soft rock, but it may gain wider application: all tunneling technologies have started in soft rock. Ramex Systems, Inc., in Washington state, has built a prototype machine that uses a battering ram to create completely variable shapes, such as rectangles and irregular curves. The Colorado School of Mines has explored a number of new cutting technologies, including abrasive jets, chemical sprays, lasers, ultrasonic vibration, and heat shock (using plasma jets and liquid nitrogen). A consortium of engineers at MIT, the University of Texas, and the University of Missouri at Rolla have designed a TBM that continuously extrudes a lining to hold up the walls and roof, preventing water seepage.

Funding the development of better tools is only one of several ways in which increasing markets drive down costs. In addition, contractors can amortize their fixed costs over many projects; clients become savvier; and the geotechnical data base for a given region—the map of the underground—gets more detailed, lowering the risk of expensive surprises. Perhaps most important is the felicitous influence of steady work. Historically the high prices associated with underground construction have attracted far more contractors into the business than could find continuous employment. Once a job was over, TBMs and other expensive tools had to be sold and crews laid off, no matter how skilled or compatible they might be. When a new job turned up, the contractor would cobble together a new tool kit and crew out of whatever happened to be available. This stop-and-go work rhythm kept costs high by keeping learning curves flat and encouraging contractors to squeeze every possible dollar out of their clients.

The consequences for pricing were illustrated recently by the contractors digging the tunnels for the Superconducting Supercollider. According to Howard Handewith, a market analyst for the American Underground-Space Association, by the time Congress canceled the project (for reasons unrelated to the tun-

neling), the costs were working out to a mere \$5 million a mile—about a third of the average cost of big-tunnel work. Although no single factor explains the entire difference, Handewith points out that the tunneling teams arrived fresh from working on the Chicago water system and the Dallas subway. They came already tuned to one another and to their tools. Handewith believes that these results suggest the kind of returns that can be expected as the opportunity to work steadily, as part of a stable team, becomes more common.

THE idea that expanding markets bring down prices, specifically by attracting more investment and accelerating the flow of practical experience into an industry, is by no means a new one. The most famous example is the computer industry, in which a market increase of seven orders of magnitude (or a factor of ten million) has been associated with a price reduction of five orders of magnitude over the past forty years. The consumer-electronics industry offers many other examples, as does the metals and materials industry, in which a doubling of the market has been associated with a halving of price for many years. Therefore the undoubted truth that the costs of underground space are still very high can be qualified with the point that the market is still very small: according to Handewith, only about \$1 billion a year in the United States, and probably somewhere between \$20 billion and \$30 billion worldwide (about what Hong Kong is spending on its new airport). The faster and longer the market grows, the faster and longer prices should fall.

It seems safe to predict many years of steady growth for an industry starting from such a small base and having so many applications. The intolerance for building on the surface is rising not just in Europe and the Pacific Rim. Our infrastructure is deteriorating. The route to full compliance with the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water and Clean Air acts often leads underground. Sewer and subway work in China during the rest of the decade could in itself double the world market, assuming that China continues to prosper. And surely the growing cities in the developing world are going to engage in some underground development.

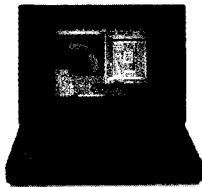
Finally, at some point falling costs

start to expand markets on their own. Projects that had been postponed or uninvestigated because of high costs can be undertaken. The two halves of this cycle will then link up—prices driving markets and markets driving prices—and the cost of underground space will chase its tail right through the basement.

This scenario might be of special interest to environmentalists. Until now those interested in preserving the surface of the earth as the domain of plants and animals have had no reason to consider the future with anything but a gloomy, rearguard fatalism. The occasional local battle might be won—two acres into a land trust here, a development scaled back there—but the trends have seemed inexorable. The tides of population and economic growth are clearly not going to crest, let alone ebb, anytime soon. Even the few scraps of habitat that have been preserved up to now could be lost at any time.

Many environmentalists attribute this problem to the failure of the culture to place enough importance on green space. “Most men, it seems to me,” Thoreau wrote, “do not care for Nature and would sell their share in all her beauty, for as long as they may live, for a stated sum—many for a glass of rum.” The promise of the price trend line for underground space is that at some point the cost of preserving and restoring habitat will fall beneath this sum, no matter how small it might be. I see no reason why at some point in the future the cost of tying every home and building into a single underground transit system—in effect, putting a subway station in every cellar—couldn’t fall so low that even “most men” would go along, whereupon roads could be torn up and planted. The environmentalist utopia is a surface devoted entirely to those functions that only the surface can perform: the support of farms, homes, parks, gardens, commons, arboretums, conservatories, preserves, reservations, and wilderness. Many environmentalists suppose that we must reach this promised land through cultural transformations, by embracing revolutionary new lifestyles centered on voluntary poverty and childlessness. Their utopia might well be achieved instead through low-cost underground construction. Of course, there is no guarantee that the culture will choose this road—but it will become easier to do so every generation from now on. ☞

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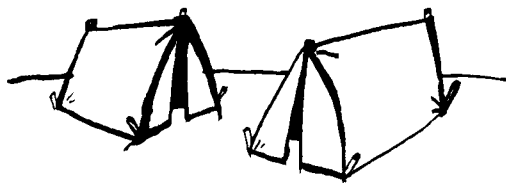


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Elemental Pleasures

Who has more fun: the putyevka people or the dikari?

AT least since the remnants of Napoleon's army straggled back into France, the idea of sojourning in the Russian hinterlands has suffered from a certain disrepute. It's true that some luxuries—hot running water, for example—are not to be taken for granted outside the tourist hotels of Moscow and St. Petersburg. And, yes, there was a diphtheria scare last year. And, okay, travelers at one Moscow airport rioted last fall when they learned that their flights were canceled for a fourth consecutive day, owing to a fuel shortage. And foreigners in Russia no longer enjoy the relative immunity they once had from muggings and thefts. If coping with dis-

comfort and risk would spoil your vacation, go to Paris or Rome again this year.

But a prudently adventurous traveler, one prepared to tolerate the absence of a few amenities, will find that there has never been a better, or cheaper, time to

see Russia and meet the

by Robert Cullen

Russian people. Prudence, sadly, now means

taking the personal security precautions advisable in any big American city. Don't display great wads of cash. Don't leave jewelry in a hotel room. But also don't be paralyzed by fear. For the past decade I have been traveling all over Russia, carrying enough dollars for cabs and meals, and leaving my laptop computer in my hotel room, and I have never

been victimized by anything worse than a restaurateur with an inflated idea of what the traffic would bear.

The adventurous will rejoice in the fact that foreigners need no longer suffer the smothering and greedy embrace of Intourist, the state travel agency, listening to guides recite the achievements of the latest Five Year Plan. It certainly helps to speak Russian, but it is not necessary; there are Russians everywhere who speak English. With a little ingenuity and boldness, you can go where you want and do what you want. You might even find a place like Limanchik, the seaside resort of Rostov State University, to which I was recently introduced by Russian friends. Limanchik will not be to everyone's taste, though it was to mine. After years spent trying to breach the barriers, tangible and intangible, that the Soviet Union erected between foreigners and its own citizens, I found it a pleasure to relax with Russians in the Russian style.

One can go to Limanchik by flying Aeroflot from Moscow to Anapa, near the Black Sea port of Novorossisk, and hiring a cab to drive the remaining dozen or so miles. I went the way the Rostovites do, by overnight train. My friends and I arrived at the station in Rostov on Don around nine in the evening. Twilight was

Limanchik's swimsuit contingent



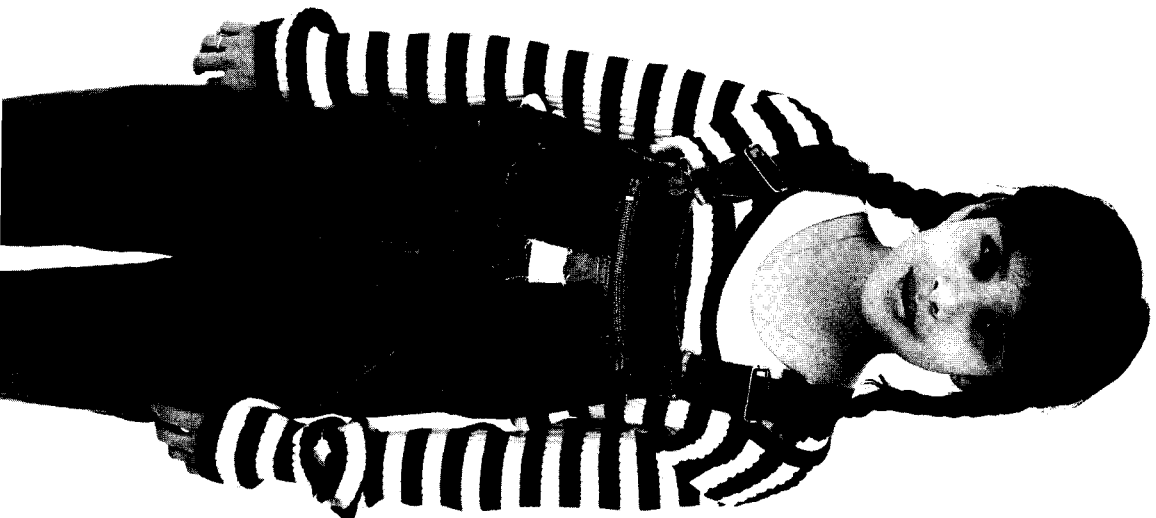
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just blending into darkness. Outside the terminal I ran a gauntlet of three-card-monte hustlers, beer kiosks, and peasant women selling cucumbers and tomatoes.

The train had only third-class cars, in

down past a jade-green lake near the village of Abrau. This area once produced a fine sparkling wine, an imitation champagne that the Czars are believed to have favored. New technology and processes introduced in the Soviet period spoiled the wine. With the onset of privatization, there are hopes that the winery will go back to the old ways and its wine will be good again.

Past Abrau the pavement starts to give way to rocks and ruts; our cab slowed. Soon it reached the crest of a final ridge and the sea appeared, slate-gray and placid. Limanchik sits at the

bottom of a steep cornice that frames a little bay with a rocky beach and a unique feature—a freshwater pond separated from the beach by only a natural dike a few feet wide. The resort has, in short, all the luxury of a Catskill Mountains summer camp in the 1930s. But the food in the dining hall is good and plentiful. That is thanks to Limanchik's geographic isolation: the kitchen workers have no opportunity to sell it out the back door into the black market, the way they do in Sochi and other larger resort towns.

For years an affiliation with the university was the only way to get access to Limanchik. During certain summer weeks only students could get a Limanchik *putyevka*, a voucher for food and lodging. Other weeks were reserved for faculty, or for staff members with small children. Still others were set aside for academic purposes—an English-language immersion course, for example. Toward the end of the summer there were mixed weeks when anyone connected to the university could get a *putyevka*, first come, first served. Economic and political reform have changed the system a little bit. The university has to demand more money. The tariff this summer is 192,000 rubles for a two-week stay, which works out to about \$7.07 a day. As a result of such exorbitant expense there are usually some vacancies nowadays at Limanchik.

ONE can also choose to experience Limanchik as a *dikar*: the term is derived from the Russian adjective for "wild" or "savage." The *dikari* first made their appearance in the wooded hillsides above the resort—and at other resorts—in the 1980s, when discipline was falling apart in every sector of Soviet life. In Limanchik many of them were graduates of the university who had grown accustomed to vacationing there as students and saw no reason to stop just because alumni had no standing to receive a *putyevka*. Deep within the soul of every regimented Soviet citizen lived a repressed anarchist, and the *dikari* let the anarchist out briefly every summer.

A *dikar* pitches his tent anywhere he can find a level piece of ground. The best sites in the woods, called "pockets," have room for three or four tents and a common area for a makeshift table and fire-place. Over the years the pockets have



Dikari enjoy a communal lunch

which fifty or sixty people slept in enforced intimacy on narrow bunks in open compartments. In one my friends and I shared a late supper of bread, butter, sausage, a little caviar, and vodka, toted from home in bulging plastic shopping bags. After we all turned in, the train pitched gently as it crept through the villages of the southern Russian steppe. It was a warm night, the car was sweltering, all the windows were locked shut, and the conductor, who had the only key, had disappeared. I seemed to be the only one who noticed, though. This is the sort of thing ordinary Russians have long since learned to endure, which may help to explain why, despite all that has happened in the past ten years, the country muddles along.

When the sun came up, we were rolling past villages of sagging wooden cottages and dirt roads. Flocks of gray geese waddled along in front of little boys with bare feet. The distance between Rostov and Novorossisk is about 200 miles, and the trip takes thirteen hours—but no one is in much of a hurry. In Novorossisk taxi drivers were lined up at the end of the platform, looking for passengers. A Westerner does well to be a sharp bargainer or else to let a Russian friend make the arrangements. Hearing a foreign accent, many Russian cabbies double their rates.

Jammed into the cab, my friends and I quickly left the city and passed into a softer and prettier Russia. Poplar and linden trees lined the narrow little road. It wound up and down over parched brown fields and vineyards slightly reminiscent of northern California. Then it dropped

down past a jade-green lake near the village of Abrau. This area once produced a fine sparkling wine, an imitation champagne that the Czars are believed to have favored. New technology and processes introduced in the Soviet period spoiled the wine. With the onset of privatization, there are hopes that the winery will go back to the old ways and its wine will be good again.

Past Abrau the pavement starts to give way to rocks and ruts; our cab slowed. Soon it reached the crest of a final ridge and the sea appeared, slate-gray and placid. Limanchik sits at the bottom of a steep cornice that frames a little bay with a rocky beach and a unique feature—a freshwater pond separated from the beach by only a natural dike a few feet wide. The pond was what first brought people from Rostov State University to Limanchik. It contains some unusual fauna, including a species of eel that migrates between the freshwater and the sea. In 1938 the state gave the pond and twenty-five surrounding acres to the university as a biological study area. In 1956 the rector of the university, Yuri Andreyevich Zhdanov, who was the son of a Politburo member and the former son-in-law of Josef Stalin (he was the second husband of Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva), established a summer camp there for teachers and students. In 1959 the state built the road from Novorossisk. Limanchik for the first time became readily accessible to vacationers.

The university, like any major Soviet enterprise, was expected to provide subsidized vacations for its cadres. A steel mill, for instance, built for its workers an enormous hotel, endowed with all the elegance and taste one would expect from Soviet steel-mill engineers, down the seacoast in Sochi. The university kept its little corner of the Black Sea small and simple. Over the years it built a communal dining hall, a few barrackslike wooden dormitories, and a handful of cottages. There is a basketball court of cracked macadam and a couple of small gathering places for lectures. A concrete swimming pier juts out



been named by their regular users, and are called things like Athens and Serpentinium and Reservation. From their pockets the *dikari* stroll through the resort to the beach, stopping on the way to fill their plastic jugs with drinking water.

Periodically in the past, the Limanchik management did what it could to thwart the *dikari*. It erected a wrought-iron fence around the property; the *dikari* sawed through the rods. It sent the *milits'a* up the hillside to destroy the tents; the *dikari* melted away into the hillside like guerrillas and returned at night to put up new tents. Finally the management gave up, and the *dikari* are now a grudgingly accepted part of the Limanchik scene.

For everyone in Limanchik, daytime life revolves around the beach and the sea. *Putyevka* people tend to use the proper beach, where swimsuits are standard. *Dikari* hike down the beach half a mile, around a corner formed by the protruding edge of the cornice, to an area they have named Diana, where swimsuits are optional. Nude bathing may be commonplace in Western Europe, but the Soviet Union was a straitlaced society, and there are political connotations to schlepping to Diana and getting naked.

The Black Sea off Limanchik at least looks clean, and both *putyevka* people and *dikari* love to frolic in it. In midafternoon the *dikari* will often swim out and dive for mussels, which they bring back to shore and roast over an open driftwood fire—a lunch they wash down with a potent punch made of vodka and fruit juice. Then they lie on the rocks and take the sun, chatting about whose institute has gotten a contract to do some work for a Western company and earn some dollars, who is sleeping with whom, and who will be hosting the evening's entertainments.

Thanks to the sterility or absence of mass entertainment during the Soviet era, Russians are still adept at entertaining themselves, a skill Westerners have unfortunately lost. In the resort the *putyevka* people will organize, say, an evening joke-telling competition in the lecture amphitheater. As the evening goes on, and the participants gradually empty their bottles, the jokes grow steadily more ethnic and scatological until they become all but untranslatable and the audience is falling off the benches.

Back in the woods the *dikari* have their

own amusements. For the past few years their favored evening pastime has been "driving the monkey." This is a simple game, and any number of people can play, provided that each has a bottle of some kind. A player grasps his or her bottle in one hand and grabs a peculiarly Russian type of flashlight in the other. The flashlight has a trigger connected to an internal mechanism that whirs and produces a bit of electricity when the trigger is pulled. Keep pulling the trigger and the flashlight keeps shining, a feature that is handy when the nearest store selling batteries is miles away. Their triggers clicking and flashlights whirring, the *dikari* trek through the darkened woods to their neighbors' pockets.

Once they have squeezed in around a campfire, the *dikari* share their spirits, alcoholic and otherwise. Some of them like to talk, and their subjects may range from the appropriate roles for men and women in the new Russia to the storytelling merits of Dickens and Dumas. But no pocket is complete without a guitarist or two, and the singing is marvelous. Someone may offer a mournful song that says life is but an instant in the slow unfolding of the universe; a visiting *dikar* will respond with a raucous satirical tune.

After a while the group, or a part of it, rises and moves on through the woods to another pocket and another campfire. By the time the moon has risen over the Black Sea, now truly black, the woods are full of Russians weaving through the trees. At a certain hour, perhaps just after midnight, players begin to report seeing a monkey swinging through the branches just in front of them—hence the name of the game.

Sometime late the next morning, long after a loudspeaker playing cheerful music has summoned the *putyevka* people to their dining hall, the *dikari* crawl cautiously from their tents. Someone gathers twigs and sticks and starts a fire. Someone else will burrow into a backpack and produce some tea and an old, blackened kettle.

A third *dikar* will produce a jar of kasha and heat it up. Someone else will slice up some hard

sausage. A couple of people sit and watch, too lazy or too bleary to help. All of the food will be combined into a communal breakfast. Then the group will head for the beach, and the cycle will begin again.

GETTING into a place like Limanchik is easy if you want to be a *dikar*. Just bring your camping equipment and look for a flat spot in the woods.

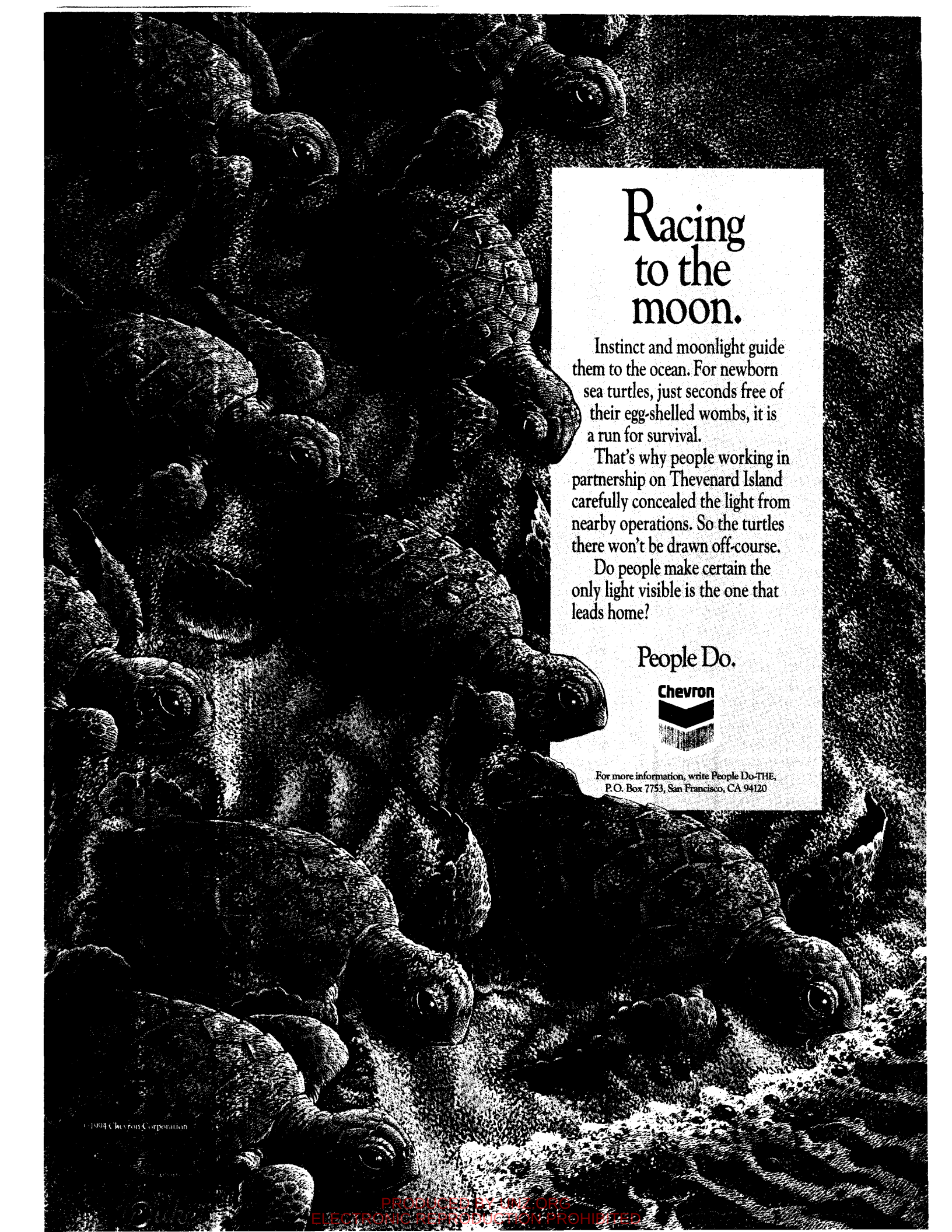
Becoming a *putyevka* person isn't much harder. You could look up the friendly director at Limanchik, Nikolai Prokopov, and ask if he has any empty beds. Or if you want to make arrangements ahead of time, you could probably wangle a *putyevka* from Vyacheslav Semiguk, the chairman of the university's trade union. His telephone number, if you're calling from abroad, is 011, and then 7 for Russia, area code 8632, 64-92-55. (Keep trying.)

You might not want to wait too long. The breakup of the Soviet Union has diminished the amount of Black Sea coastline belonging to Russia, and that, along with the turmoil and warfare in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, nearby, means that there is bound to be pressure to accommodate increasing numbers of vacationers in the Novorossisk area. At some point Limanchik will surely run out of room for *dikari*, and *putyevka* people for \$7.07 a day. ☼

Train tickets from Rostov

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*Marijuana has not been de facto
legalized, and the war on drugs is not just about
cocaine and heroin. In fact, today, when we don't have enough jail cells
for murderers, rapists, and other violent criminals, there may be more
people in federal and state prisons for marijuana offenses than
at any other time in U.S. history*

REEFER MADNESS

by ERIC SCHLOSSER



IN the state of Indiana a person convicted of armed robbery will serve about five years in prison; someone convicted of rape will serve about twelve; and a convicted murderer can expect to spend twenty years behind bars. These figures are actually higher than the figures nationwide: eight years and eight months in prison is the average punishment for an American found guilty of murder. The prison terms given by Indiana judges tend to be long, but with good behavior an

inmate will serve no more than half the nominal sentence. Those facts are worth keeping in mind when considering the case of Mark Young. At the age of thirty-eight Young was arrested at his Indianapolis home for brokering the sale of 700 pounds of marijuana grown on a farm in nearby Morgan County. Young was tried and convicted under federal law. He had never before been charged with drug trafficking. He had no history of violent crime. Young's role in the illegal transaction had been that of a middleman—he never distributed the drugs; he simply introduced two people hoping to sell a large amount of marijuana to three people wishing to buy it. The offense occurred a year and a half prior to his ar-

rest. No confiscated marijuana, money, or physical evidence of any kind linked Young to the crime. He was convicted solely on the testimony of co-conspirators who were now cooperating with the government. On February 8, 1992, Mark Young was sentenced by Judge Sarah Evans Barker to life imprisonment without possibility of parole.

There was so much talk in the 1970s about the decriminalization of marijuana, and the smoking of marijuana is so casually taken for granted in much of our culture, that many people assume that a marijuana offense these days will rarely lead to a prison term. But in fact there may be more people in prison today for violating marijuana laws than at any other

time in the nation's history. Calculations based on data provided by the Bureau of Prisons and the United States Sentencing Commission suggest that one of every six inmates in the federal prison system—roughly 15,000 people—has been incarcerated primarily for a marijuana offense. The number currently being held in state prisons and local jails is more difficult to estimate; a conservative guess would be an additional 20,000 to 30,000. And Mark Young's sentence, though unusual, is by no means unique. A dozen or more marijuana offenders may now be serving life sentences in federal penitentiaries without hope of parole; if one includes middle-aged inmates with sentences of twenty or thirty or forty years, the number condemned to die in prison may reach into the hundreds. Other inmates—no one knows how many—are serving life sentences in state correctional facilities across the country for growing, selling, or even possessing marijuana.

The phrase "war on drugs" evokes images of Colombian cartels and inner-city crack addicts. In many ways that is a misperception. Marijuana is and has long been the most widely used illegal drug in the United States. It is used here more frequently than all other illegal drugs combined. According to conservative estimates, one third of the American population over the age of eleven has smoked marijuana at least once. More than 17 million Americans smoked it in 1992. At least three million smoke it on a daily basis. Unlike heroin or cocaine, which must be imported, anywhere from a quarter to half of the marijuana used in this country is grown here as well. Although popular stereotypes depict marijuana growers as aging hippies in northern California or Hawaii, the majority of the marijuana now cultivated in the United States is being grown in the nation's midsection—a swath running roughly from the Appalachians west to the Great Plains. Throughout this Marijuana Belt drug fortunes are being made by farmers who often seem to have stepped from a page of the old *Saturday Evening Post*. The value of America's annual marijuana crop is staggering: plausible estimates start at \$4 billion and range up to \$24 billion. In 1993 the value of the nation's largest legal cash crop, corn, was roughly \$16 billion.

Marijuana has well-organized supporters who campaign for its legalization and promote its use through books, magazines, and popular music. They regard marijuana as not only a benign recreational drug but also a form of herbal medicine and a product with industrial applications. Marijuana's opponents are equally passionate and far better organized. They consider marijuana a dangerous drug—one that harms the user's mental, physical, and spiritual well-being, promotes irresponsible sexual behavior, and encourages disrespect for traditional values. At the heart of the ongoing bitter debate is a hardy weed that can grow wild in all fifty states. The two sides agree that countless lives have been destroyed by marijuana, but disagree about what should be blamed: the plant itself, or the laws forbidding its use.

The war on drugs embraced by President Ronald Reagan began largely as a campaign against marijuana organized by

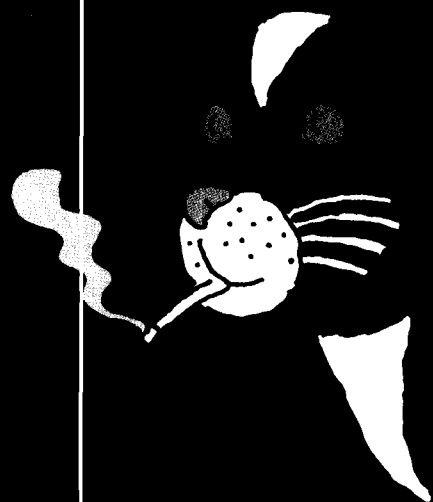
conservative parents' groups in the late 1970s. After more than a decade in which penalties for marijuana offenses had been reduced at both the state and federal levels, the laws regarding marijuana were made much tougher in the 1980s. More resources were devoted to their enforcement, and punishments more severe than those administered during the "reefer madness" of the 1930s became routine. All the legal tools commonly associated with the fight against heroin and cocaine trafficking—civil forfeitures, enhanced police search powers, the broad application of conspiracy laws, a growing reliance on the testimony of informers, and mechanistic sentencing formulas, such as mandatory minimums and "three strikes, you're out"—have been employed against marijuana offenders. The story of how Mark Young got a life sentence reveals a great deal about the emergence of the American heartland as the region where a vast amount of the nation's marijuana is now grown; about the changing composition of the federal prison population; and about the effects of the war on drugs, a dozen years after its declaration, throughout America's criminal-justice system. Underlying Young's tale is a simple question: How does a society come to punish a person more harshly for selling marijuana than for killing someone with a gun?

THE PLANT IN QUESTION

"MARIJUANA" is the Mexican colloquial name for a plant known to botanists as *Cannabis sativa*. In various forms it has long been familiar throughout the world: in Africa as "dagga," in China as "ma," in Northern Europe as "hemp." Although cannabis most likely originated in the steppes of central Asia, it now thrives in almost any climate, spreading like milkweed or thistle, crowding out neighboring grasses and reaching heights of three to twenty feet at maturity. Marijuana has been cultivated for at least 5,000 years; it is one of the oldest agricultural commodities not grown for food. The stalks of the plant contain fibers that have been woven for millennia to make rope, canvas, and paper. Cannabis is dioecious, spawning male and female plants in equal proportion. The flowering buds of the female—and to a lesser extent those of the male—secrete a sticky yellow resin rich with cannabinoids, the more than sixty compounds unique to marijuana. Several of them are psychoactive, most prominently delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

Lester Grinspoon, an associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, believes that marijuana will someday be hailed as a "miracle drug," one that is safe, inexpensive, and versatile. In his book *Marihuana, the Forbidden Medicine* (1993) Grinspoon provides anecdotal evidence that smoking marijuana can relieve the nausea associated with chemotherapy, prevent blindness induced by glaucoma, serve as an appetite stimulant for AIDS patients, act as an

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anti-epileptic, ward off asthma attacks and migraine headaches, alleviate chronic pain, and reduce the muscle spasticity that accompanies multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and paraplegia. Other doctors think that Grinspoon is wildly optimistic, and that no "crude drug" like marijuana—composed of more than 400 chemicals—should be included in the modern pharmacopoeia. They point out that effective synthetic drugs, of precise dosage and purity, have been developed for every one of marijuana's potential uses. Dronabinol, a synthetic form of delta-9-THC, has been available for years, though some clinical oncologists find it inferior to marijuana as an anti-nausea agent. There have been remarkably few large-scale studies that might verify or disprove Grinspoon's claims. Nevertheless, thirty-six states allow the medicinal use of marijuana, and eight patients are currently receiving it from the Public Health Service. According to Grinspoon, the federal government has always been far more interested in establishing marijuana's harmful effects than in discovering any of its benefits, while major drug companies have little incentive to fund expensive research on marijuana. As Grinspoon explains, "You cannot patent this plant."

The long-term health effects of chronic marijuana use, and marijuana's role as a "gateway" to the use of other illegal drugs, are issues surrounded by great controversy. Mari-

juana does not create a physical dependence in its users, but it does create a psychological dependence in some. People who smoke marijuana are far more likely to experiment later with other psychoactive drugs, but no direct cause-and-effect relationship has ever been established. Delta-9-THC is highly lipid-soluble and has a half-life of five days, which means that it diffuses widely throughout the human body and remains there for quite some time: an occasional user can fail a urine test three days after smoking a single joint, and a heavy user may test positive after abstaining from marijuana for more than a month. Delta-9-THC's persistence within various cells and vital organs (also a characteristic of Valium, Thorazine, and quinine) suggests that it could have the ability to exert subtly harmful effects; few have yet been proved. Studies of lifelong heavy marijuana users in Jamaica, Greece, and Costa Rica reveal little psychological or physiological damage. Much more research, however, needs to be done in the areas of cognition, reproduction, and immunology. Adolescent users in particular would be at risk if marijuana were found to have pernicious systemic effects. Some studies have shown that short-term memory deficiencies in heavy smokers, though reversible, may endure long after the cessation of marijuana use. Other studies have demonstrated *in vitro* and in laboratory animals that marijuana may have a mild immunosuppressive effect, but no

study has conclusively linked delta-9-THC to immune-system changes in human beings. Well-publicized horror stories from the 1970s—that marijuana kills brain cells, damages chromosomes, and prompts men to grow breasts—were based on faulty research.

Smoking marijuana does seem to damage the pulmonary system, in some of the ways that inhaling tobacco smoke does. In a study of people who have smoked four or five joints a day for more than ten years, the physician Donald P. Tashkin, of the University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center, has found substantial evidence that marijuana smoke can cause chronic bronchitis, changes in cells of the central airway which are potentially pre-cancerous, and an impairment in scavenger-cell function which could lead to a greater risk of respiratory infection. A joint seems to deliver four times as much carcinogenic tar as a tobacco cigarette of the same size. Tashkin expects that some heavy marijuana users will eventually suffer cancers of the mouth, throat, and lungs, although none of his research subjects has yet developed a malignancy. Oddly enough, the more potent

CRIMINALIZED, DECRIMINALIZED, RECRIMINALIZED

THE first American law pertaining to marijuana, passed by the Virginia Assembly in 1619, required every farmer to grow it. Hemp was deemed not only a valuable commodity but also a strategic necessity; its fibers were used to make sails and riggings, and its by-products were transformed into oakum for the caulking of wooden ships. Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland eventually allowed hemp to be exchanged as legal tender, in order to stimulate its production and relieve Colonial money shortages. Although a number of the Founding Fathers, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, later grew hemp on their estates, there is no evidence that they were aware of the plant's psychoactive properties. The domestic production of hemp flourished, especially in Kentucky, until after the Civil War, when it was replaced by imports from Russia and by other domestic materials. In the latter half of the nineteenth century marijuana became a popular ingredient in



OW DOES A SOCIETY COME TO PUNISH A PERSON

MORE HARSHLY FOR SELLING MARIJUANA THAN FOR

KILLING SOMEONE WITH A GUN?

strains of marijuana may prove less dangerous, since less of them needs to be smoked.

There is much less disagreement about the short-term health effects of marijuana. According to the physician Leo Hollister, a former president of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, who now teaches at the University of Texas, the occasional use of marijuana by a healthy adult poses no greater risks than the moderate consumption of alcohol. For a variety of reasons, however, marijuana should not be smoked by schizophrenics, pregnant women, and people with heart conditions. Although the misuse of over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, acetaminophen, and antihistamines each year kills hundreds of Americans, not a single death has ever been credibly attributed directly to smoking or consuming marijuana in the 5,000 years of the plant's recorded use. Marijuana is one of the few therapeutically active substances known to man for which there is no well-defined fatal dose. It has been estimated that a person would have to smoke a hundred pounds of marijuana a minute for fifteen minutes in order to induce a lethal response.

patent medicines and was sold openly at pharmacies in one-ounce herbal packages and in alcohol-based tinctures as a cure for migraines, rheumatism, and insomnia.

The political upheaval in Mexico that culminated in the Revolution of 1910 led to a wave of Mexican immigration to states throughout the American Southwest. The prejudices and fears that greeted these peasant immigrants also extended to their traditional means of intoxication: smoking marijuana. Police officers in Texas claimed that marijuana incited violent crimes, aroused a "lust for blood," and gave its users "superhuman strength." Rumors spread that Mexicans were distributing this "killer weed" to unsuspecting American schoolchildren. Sailors and West Indian immigrants brought the practice of smoking marijuana to port cities along the Gulf of Mexico. In New Orleans newspaper articles associated the drug with African-Americans, jazz musicians, prostitutes, and underworld whites. "The Marijuana Menace," as sketched by anti-drug campaigners, was personified by inferior races and social deviants. In 1914 El Paso, Texas, enacted perhaps the first U.S. ordinance banning the sale or possession of marijuana; by 1931 twenty-

nine states had outlawed marijuana, usually with little fanfare or debate. Amid the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment fueled by the Great Depression, public officials from the Southwest and from Louisiana petitioned the Treasury Department to outlaw marijuana. Their efforts were aided by a lurid propaganda campaign. "MURDER WEED FOUND UP AND DOWN COAST," one headline warned; "DEADLY MARIJUANA DOPE PLANT READY FOR HARVEST THAT MEANS ENSLAVEMENT OF CALIFORNIA CHILDREN." Harry J. Anslinger, the commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, at first doubted the seriousness of the problem and the need for federal legislation, but soon he pursued the goal of a nationwide marijuana prohibition with enormous gusto. In public appearances and radio broadcasts Anslinger asserted that the use of this "evil weed" led to killings, sex crimes, and insanity. He wrote sensational magazine articles with titles like "Marijuana: Assassin of Youth." In 1937 Congress passed the Marijuana Tax Act, effectively criminalizing the possession of marijuana throughout the United States. A week after it went into effect, a fifty-eight-year-old marijuana dealer named Samuel R. Caldwell became the first person convicted under the new statute. Although marijuana offenders had been treated leniently under state and local laws, Judge J. Foster Symes, of Denver, lectured Caldwell on the viciousness of marijuana and sentenced him to four hard years at Leavenworth Penitentiary.

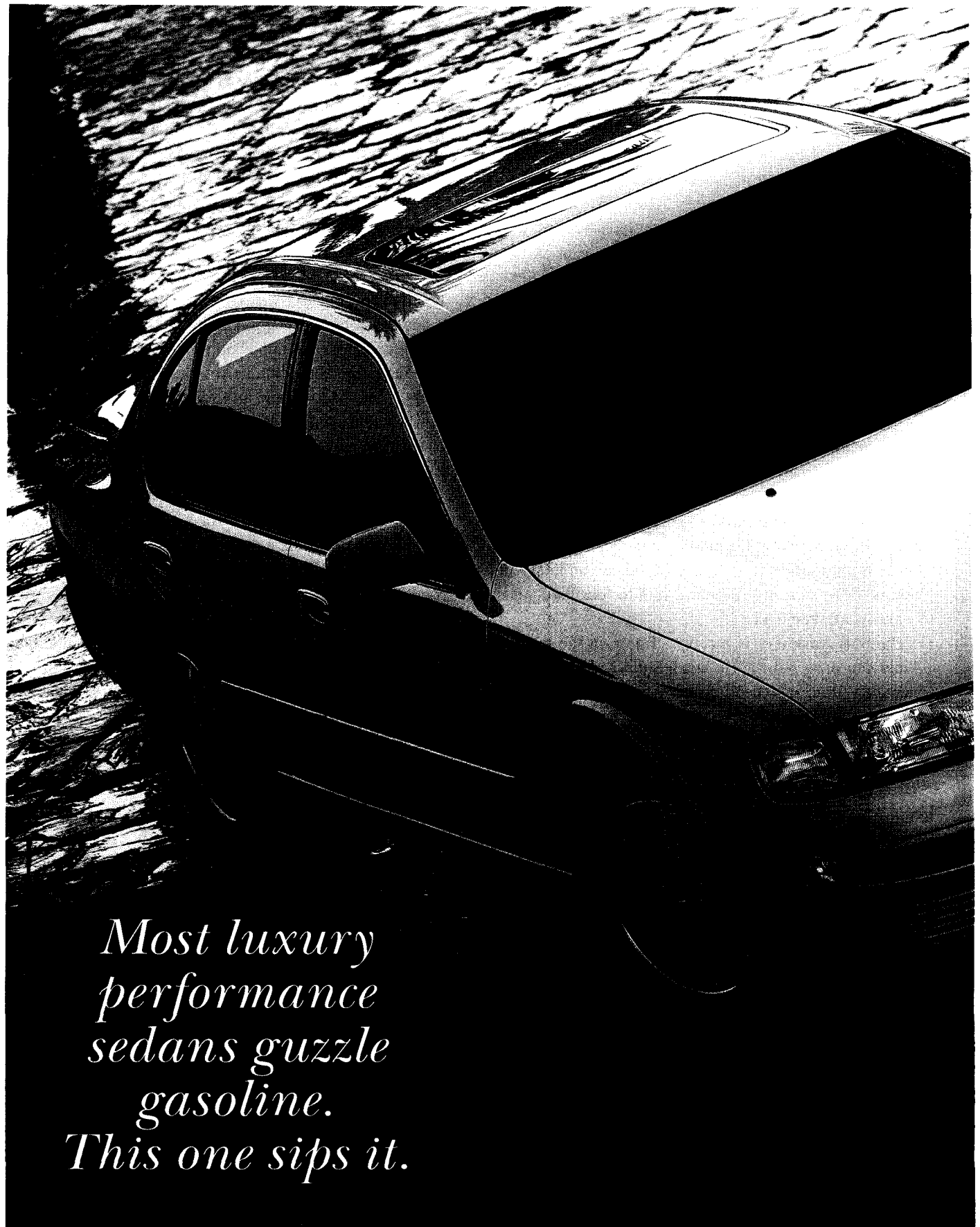
Harry J. Anslinger is a central figure in the history of American drug policy. He headed the Federal Bureau of Narcotics from its inception through five presidential Administrations spanning more than three decades. Anslinger had much in common with his rival, J. Edgar Hoover. Both were conservative, staunchly anti-communist proponents of law and order who imbued nascent federal bureaus with their own idiosyncracies. Anslinger did not believe in a public-health approach to drug addiction; he dismissed treatment clinics as "morphine feeding stations" and "barrooms for addicts." In his view, strict enforcement of the law was the only proper response to illegal drug use; he urged judges to "jail offenders, then throw away the key." Anslinger's outlook was consistent with that of most Americans, though his opinions proved more resistant to new scientific evidence. When the New York Academy of Medicine—after years of research—issued a report in 1944 concluding that marijuana use did not cause violent behavior, provoke insanity, lead to addiction, or promote opiate use, Anslinger angrily dismissed its authors as "dangerous" and "strange."

America's drug problem often seemed the work of foreign powers: during the Second World War, Anslinger accused the Japanese of using narcotics to sap America's will to fight; a few years later he asserted that Communists were attempting the same ploy. The Boggs Act, passed by Congress at the height of the McCarthy era, specified the same penalties for marijuana and heroin offenses—two to five years in prison for first-time possession. As justification for the long

sentences contained in that act and in the Narcotic Control Act, which followed in 1956, Anslinger stressed marijuana's crucial role as a "stepping-stone" to narcotics addiction. Like Hoover, he maintained dossiers on well-known entertainers whose behavior seemed un-American. Anslinger disliked jazz and kept a special file, "Marijuana and Musicians," filled with reports on band members who played with Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, Les Brown, Count Basie, Jimmy Dorsey, and Duke Ellington, among others. For months Anslinger planned a nationwide roundup of popular musicians—a scheme that was foiled by the inability of FBN agents to infiltrate the jazz milieu. Although Anslinger's opposition to drug use was both passionate and sincere, he made one notable exception. In his memoir, *The Murderers*, Anslinger confessed to having arranged a regular supply of morphine for "one of the most influential members of Congress," who had become an addict. Anslinger's biographer believes that addict was Senator Joseph R. McCarthy.

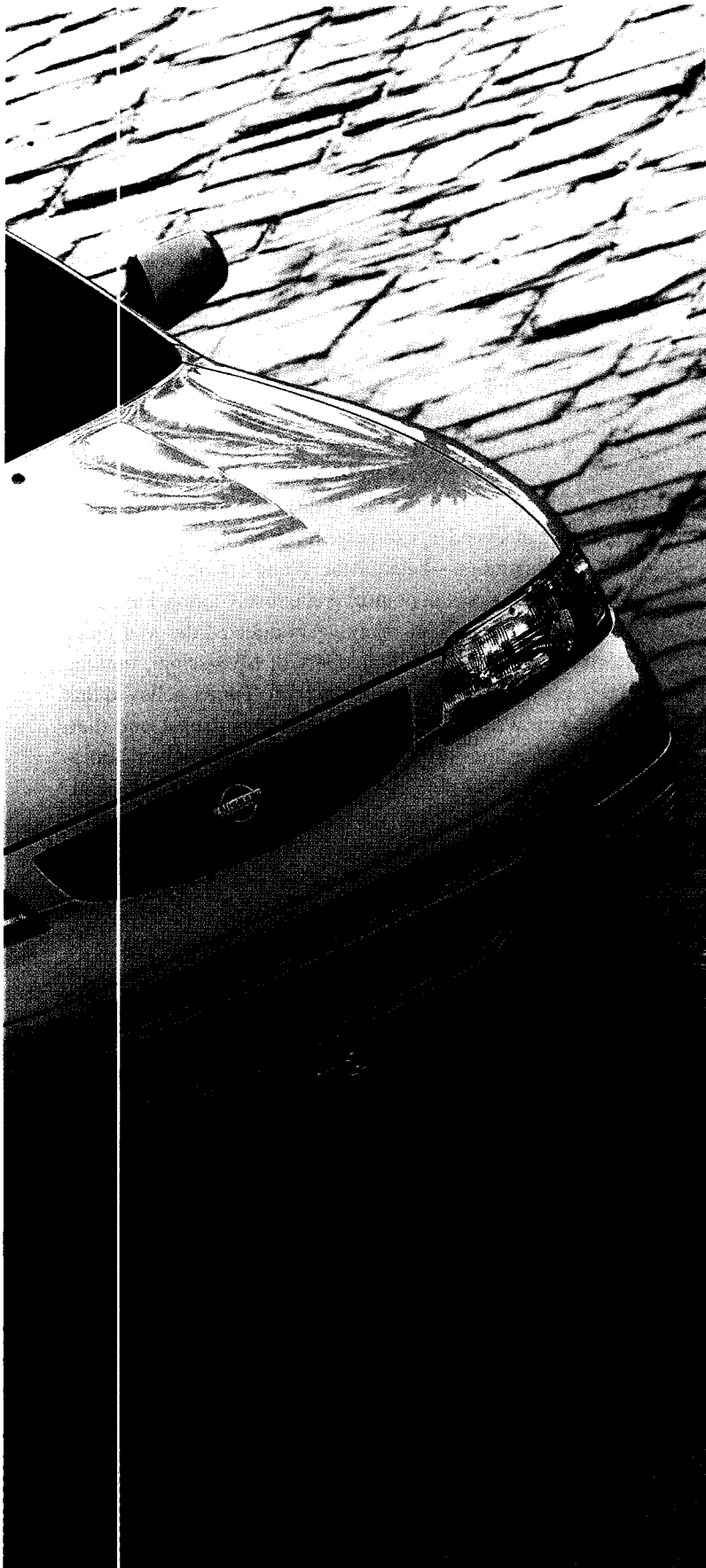
By 1962, when Harry J. Anslinger retired, many states had passed "little Boggs Acts" with penalties for marijuana possession or sale tougher than those demanded by federal law. In Louisiana sentences for simple possession ranged from five to ninety-nine years; in Missouri a second offense could result in a life sentence; and in Georgia a second conviction for selling marijuana to minors could bring the death penalty. As the political climate changed during the 1960s, so did attitudes toward drug abuse. A series of commissions appointed by Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson repudiated some of the basic assumptions that had guided marijuana policy for more than fifty years, denying a direct link between the drug and violent crime or heroin use. As marijuana use became widespread among white middle-class college students, there was a reappraisal of marijuana laws that for decades had imprisoned poor Mexicans and African-Americans without much public dissent. Drug-abuse policy shifted from a purely criminal-justice approach to one also motivated by interests of public health, with more emphasis on treatment than on punishment. In 1970 the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act finally differentiated marijuana from other narcotics and reduced federal penalties for possession of small amounts. As directed by Congress, President Richard Nixon appointed a bipartisan commission to study marijuana. In 1972 the Shafer Commission issued its report, advocating the decriminalization of marijuana for personal use—a recommendation that Nixon flatly rejected. Nevertheless, eleven states, containing a third of the country's population, decriminalized marijuana in the 1970s, and most other states weakened their laws against it. President Jimmy Carter endorsed decriminalization, and it seemed that long prison sentences for marijuana offenders had been consigned to the nation's past.

But they had not. One of the seminal events in the creation of the modern American anti-drug movement was a backyard barbecue held in Atlanta, Georgia, during August



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of 1976. In the aftermath of their daughter's birthday party, Ron and Marsha Manatt combed through the wet grass in their pajamas, at one in the morning, with flashlights, finding dozens of marijuana roaches, rolling-paper packets, and empty bottles of Mad Dog 20/20 fortified wine discarded by their twelve- and thirteen-year-old guests. Alarmed by these discoveries, the Manatts gathered local parents in their living room and formed what was soon known as the Nosy Parents Association, a group dedicated to preventing teenage drug use. Marsha Manatt wrote to Robert DuPont, the head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse; he helped arrange her introduction to Thomas Gleaton, a professor of health education at Georgia State University. There soon arose the Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education and the National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth, two organizations backed by top officials at NIDA and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) which would exert tremendous influence on the nation's drug policies. Thousands of other

parents' groups soon formed nationwide, and Ross Perot helped launch the Texans' War on Drugs.

Marijuana use seemed epidemic: a survey in 1976 found that one out of twelve high school seniors smoked pot on a daily basis. In the 1960s the youth counterculture had celebrated marijuana's reputation as a drug for outcasts and freaks. One Yippie leader had confidently predicted that the slogan of the coming revolution would be "pot, freedom, license." The conservative parents' groups took such words to heart and similarly invested marijuana with great meaning. Robert DuPont, who at NIDA had once supported decriminalization, later decried the "tumultuous change in values" among the young—their pursuit of pleasure, their lack of responsibility to society—and argued that "the leading edge of this cultural change was marijuana use."

The election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency brought the war on drugs to the White House. In June of 1982 President Reagan signed an executive order creating a new post in his Administration—head of the White House Drug Abuse Policy Office—and appointed a chemist, Carlton Turner, to the job. Turner had for many years directed the Marijuana Research Project at the University of Mississippi, running the government's only marijuana farm. Turner believed that marijuana was an extremely dangerous drug—one that, among other things, might have the power to induce homosexuality. In 1977 the DEA had acknowledged that decriminalization was a policy worth considering; three years later it called marijuana the most urgent drug problem facing the United States. Richard Bonnie, a professor at the University of Virginia Law School who was an influential member of the Shafer Commission staff, believes that advocates of marijuana-law reform were pushed out of the mainstream by the growing stridency and power of the parents' groups. Political moderates soon abandoned the issue. Amid their silence, philosophies of "zero tolerance" and "user accountability" revived the notion that what drug offenders deserved most was punishment. The Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, and the Anti-Drug Abuse Amendment Act of 1988 raised federal penalties for marijuana possession, cultivation, and trafficking. Sentences were to be determined by the quantity of the drug involved; "conspiracies" and "attempts" were to be punished as severely as completed acts; and possession of a hundred marijuana plants now carried the same sentence as possession of a hundred grams of heroin.

THE UNFROCKED GOVERNESS

(for Elizabeth Bishop)

Round of face, with dimpled chin and cheeks
framed by her plumage of white hair,
the poet took a cup of tea and spoke
in stolid, undemonstrative discourse
six inches short of gossip. She disdained
the routine poets' talk of poetry
and poets, what she read, what she disliked,
even the poetry that she adored.
Something beyond this flickered in her eyes,
a glint of mischief or irreverence,
neither disclosed to me, although much later
I read of passions, fury, suicide,
legendary benders lasting weeks. Ah, how
could this dear old lady, orphaned as a child
by madness, give hostage to it in
the loves she chose, the fellow poets who,
loving her work and loving her, went mad
and died by striking at their enemies:
themselves. And she? Observant of gentility,
of the affections and obsessions, wrote
with painful effort, though the consequence
felt easy as the breath of summer. Pain
crippled her life, yet she insisted: *Write it!*

—PETER DAVISON

THE CAPRICE OF GEOGRAPHY

MARIJUANA is currently classified as a Schedule I controlled substance, implying that it has a high potential for abuse, no officially accepted medicinal uses, and no safe level of use under medical supervision. Heroin, LSD, and peyote are other Schedule I drugs; cocaine

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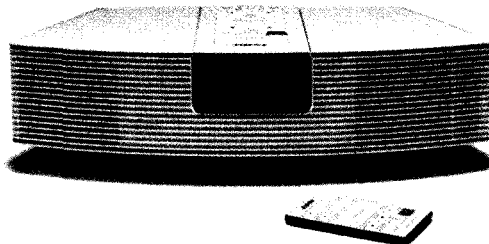
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and phencyclidine (PCP) are listed in Schedule II, allowing doctors to prescribe them. Under federal law it is illegal to buy, sell, grow, or possess any amount of marijuana anywhere in the United States. Penalties for a first offense range from probation to life imprisonment, with fines of up to \$4 million, depending on the quantity of marijuana involved. Moreover, it is illegal to use the U.S. Postal Service or other interstate shippers for the advertisement, import, or export of such marijuana paraphernalia as roach clips, water pipes, and, in some instances, cigarette papers—a crime that can lead to imprisonment and fines of up to \$100,000. Under civil-forfeiture statutes real estate, vehicles, cash, securities, jewelry, and any other property connected with a marijuana offense are subject to immediate seizure. The federal government need not prove that the property was bought with the proceeds of illegal drug sales, only that it was involved in the commission of a crime—that marijuana was grown on certain land or transported in a particular vehicle. Property may be forfeited even after a defendant has been found innocent of the offense, since the burden of proof that applies to people—"beyond a reasonable doubt"—does not apply in accusations against inanimate objects. Property can be forfeited without its owner's ever being charged with a crime. On top of fines, incarceration, and forfeiture, a convicted marijuana offender may face the revocation or denial of

more than 460 federal benefits, including student loans, small-business loans, professional licenses, and farm subsidies. In international smuggling cases the offender's passport can be revoked.

State marijuana laws were also toughened during the 1980s and now vary enormously. Some states classify marijuana with drugs like mescaline and heroin, while others give it a separate legal category. In New York state possessing slightly less than an ounce of marijuana brings a \$100 fine, rarely collected. In Nevada possessing any amount of marijuana is a felony. In Montana selling a pound of marijuana, first offense, could lead to a life sentence, whereas in New Mexico selling 10,000 pounds of marijuana, first offense, could be punished with a prison term of no more than three years. In some states it is against the law to be in a room where marijuana is being smoked, even if you don't smoke any. In some states you may be subject to criminal charges if someone else uses, distributes, or cultivates marijuana on your property. In Idaho selling water pipes could lead to a prison sentence of nine years. In Kentucky products made of hemp fibers, such as paper and clothing, not only are illegal but carry the same penalties associated with an equivalent weight of marijuana. In Arizona, where marijuana use is forbidden, the crime can be established by the failure of a urine test: a person could theoretically be prosecuted in Phoenix

for a joint smoked in Philadelphia more than a week before.

Crossing an invisible state line with marijuana in your car can result in vastly different punishments. If you are caught with three ounces of marijuana in Union City, Ohio, you will probably be fined \$100. But if you are caught in the town of the same name literally across the road in Indiana, you could face nine months to two years in prison, a fine of up to \$10,000, a felony record, suspension of your driver's license, forfeiture of your car, and charges of marijuana possession, of possession with intent to distribute, and of "maintaining a common nuisance" (for the criminal use of an automobile). That one arrest in Indiana might cost you the \$10,000 fine and at least \$5,000 in legal fees, plus the value of your forfeited car. Wide discrepancies in punishment occur not just between states but also from county to county within a given state. In La Salle County, Illinois, a first-time offender arrested with 300 pounds of marijuana might be sentenced to four months in boot camp. Sixty-five miles to the south, in McLean County, the same person convicted of the same crime would more likely receive a prison sentence of four to eight years.

IN 1992 more than 340,000 people were arrested nationwide for violating marijuana laws. Almost three quarters of those arrests were for simple possession, a crime that generally does not lead to incarceration. But possession of more than an ounce—roughly equal to the amount of tobacco in a pack of cigarettes—is in many states a felony. Conviction may lead to a few months or a few years behind bars and the loss of a house or a job. People who use marijuana as medicine must either buy it from drug dealers or grow it themselves, often in violation of the law. James Cox, a cancer patient in St. Louis, was found guilty of growing marijuana and sentenced to fifteen years in prison; after the verdict both he and his wife attempted suicide. Orland Foster, an AIDS patient in North Carolina, served fifteen months for growing marijuana; one of his cellmates served less time for killing a woman. Now on probation, Foster must either give up marijuana and risk losing weight, or violate the terms of his release and risk going back to prison.

In perhaps the most extraordinary case of this kind, Jim Montgomery, a paraplegic immobilized from the waist down, who smoked marijuana to relieve muscle spasms, was arrested in Sayre, Oklahoma, when sheriffs found two ounces of pot in the pouch on the back of his wheelchair. Montgomery was tried and convicted in 1992, by a jury, for possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, for possession of paraphernalia, for unlawful possession of a weapon during the commission of a crime (two handguns inherited from his father, a police officer), and for maintaining a place resorted to by users of controlled substances. His sentence was life in prison, plus sixteen years. Both the judge and the local prosecutor were disturbed by the sentence chosen by the jury; the judge subsequently reduced it to ten years.

Montgomery spent ten months in a prison medical unit, where he developed a life-threatening infection, before being released on bond. His appeal is now pending. "I'll never go back to that prison," he says. "I'd rather put a bullet in my head." His case has already cost him more than \$30,000 in legal fees. The government's effort to seize Montgomery's home, shared with his widowed mother, proved unsuccessful.

Oklahoma today has a well-deserved reputation for being the worst place in the United States to be caught with marijuana. On June 11, 1992, Larry Jackson, a small-time crook with a lengthy record of nonviolent offenses, was arrested at a friend's Tulsa apartment. On the floor near Jackson's right foot a police officer noticed a minuscule amount of marijuana—0.16 of a gram, which is 0.005644 of an ounce. Jackson was charged with felony possession of marijuana, convicted, and given a life sentence. In Oklahoma City, Leland James Dodd was given *two* life sentences, plus ten years, for buying fifty pounds of marijuana from undercover officers in a "reverse sting." Oklahoma is not alone in handing out life sentences for buying marijuana from the government. In Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, William Stephen Bonner, a truck driver, was sent away for life without possibility of parole after state narcotics agents delivered forty pounds of marijuana to his bedroom. Raymond Pope, a resident of Georgia, was lured to Baldwin County, Alabama, in 1990 with promises of cheap marijuana; he bought twenty-seven pounds from local sheriffs in a reverse sting, was convicted, and was sentenced to life without possibility of parole. Pope's criminal record consisted of prior convictions for stealing televisions and bedspreads from Georgia motels. He is now imprisoned 400 miles from his family. He has three young children.

Although the penalties for buying, selling, or possessing marijuana are often severe, the penalties for growing it can be even more severe. In Iowa cultivating any amount can lead to a five-year prison sentence, in Colorado to an eight-year sentence, in Missouri to a fifteen-year sentence. In the state of Virginia the recommended punishment for growing a single marijuana plant is a prison term of five to thirty years.

A FARM IN MORGAN COUNTY

IN November of 1988 Claude Atkinson and Ernest Montgomery met at a Denny's near the airport in Indianapolis to discuss setting up a large-scale marijuana-growing operation. Atkinson, a fifty-nine-year-old Indiana native, was by all accounts charismatic and highly skilled at cultivating marijuana. Ostensibly a used-farm-implements dealer, Atkinson had organized huge marijuana farms in Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky. His knowledge of growing techniques was much more impressive than his skill at eluding capture. In 1984 law-enforcement authorities had linked him to a pot farm in Paragon, Indiana; the following year he

was caught growing marijuana with artificial light in an immense Indianapolis warehouse; and in 1987 a deer hunter stumbled upon thousands of his marijuana plants in an Indiana field. Claude Atkinson had cut a series of deals with the government, informing on others after each arrest and serving brief terms in prison, where he recruited employees for future ventures. Now fresh out of custody and broke, he was ready to get back into the growing business. Ernest Montgomery was an unemployed truck driver in his early forties who wanted to make big money. They agreed to form a partnership, with Montgomery supplying the capital and Atkinson the expertise. Soon after their meeting Claude Atkinson went to the Indiana statehouse and formed a dummy corporation, R.P.Z. Investments, using one of his many pseudonyms, Arno Zepp.

That fall Atkinson supervised the construction of a large "grow room" in the basement of a secluded cabin that Montgomery owned in Gosport. Montgomery enlisted his younger brother, Jerry, a gravedigger with a slight drinking problem, to help with the task. Together the three men

farm for \$10,000 in cash, which she then took straight to her bank.

After Ernest Montgomery and his wife, Cindy, obtained the house, David Haynes moved into it, to babysit the operation, having obtained a sham rental agreement from R.P.Z. Investments as a legal buffer against what was about to happen on the land. The group plowed and tilled the field, fertilized it, and planted corn. Once the corn had reached a good height, they planted marijuana, hiding it amid the stalks. Over the summer they walked the fields, "sexing" the marijuana—eliminating all the males. The females, left unpolinated, would produce a much higher level of delta-9-THC in their buds, and would thus become a much more valuable crop: sensimilla. In late September, before the corn leaves turned golden, the group harvested the marijuana and then cured it in the barn for two weeks and cut it into "books" about a foot wide and three feet long. The books were hauled into the farmhouse or driven to the cabin in Gosport for manicuring: the stems, orphan leaves, and fan leaves were separated from the precious buds. So far the operation had gone



DVOCATES OF MARIJUANA-LAW REFORM WERE

PUSHED OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM BY THE GROWING

STRIDENCY OF THE PARENTS' GROUPS.

drilled holes in the concrete floor for drainage, built a cooling system, assembled ballasts and reflectors, suspended grow lights with thousand-watt halide bulbs from the ceiling, and planted marijuana seeds in small pots. They installed a generator so that the operation would not be detected through an incongruously high electric bill. Montgomery invited David Lee Haynes, a young lumberyard rip saw operator from Louisville, Kentucky, and the son of an old friend, to come live at the cabin and tend the plants. After digging graves all day, Jerry Montgomery would visit the dark basement in the evenings. By spring the group had approximately 12,500 seedlings of marijuana, contained in sixteen plywood flats. What they needed next was a farm.

In May of 1989 Martha Brummett, an elderly woman hard of hearing, agreed to lease her farmhouse halfway between Eminence and Cloverdale, in Morgan County, to R.P.Z. Investments. It came with about forty acres, a barn, and an option to buy. Martha Brummett was surprised that when a "Charlie Peters" arrived to sign the lease, the woman with him remained in the car and never entered the house. Nevertheless, Brummett innocently signed over her

smoothly. Soon there would be about 900 pounds of high-quality marijuana to sell. Now the group needed buyers. Ernest Montgomery thought that Mark Young, a man whom he had met a few times with Cindy, might know the right people to call.

Mark Young was thirty-six and had been smoking marijuana on a daily basis since his late teens. He grew up in Christian Park Heights, a middle-class neighborhood on the east side of Indianapolis. His father left the family when Mark was two; he and his sister, Andrea, were raised by their mother, Mary, who worked as a waitress or a hostess to pay the bills. Young was a willful, stubborn, charming boy, always getting into trouble. He seemed to have, throughout his pranks and petty thefts, the sort of bad luck that is almost uncanny—often he would get caught while his friends got away. Young dropped out of high school after a year, became a father at the age of sixteen, married to give the child his name, divorced, worked as a carpet-layer, washed dishes, laid concrete, tended bar, sold used cars, and rebuilt Harley-Davidson motorcycles. He kept an album filled with pictures of his favorite Harleys. He knew all the local biker gangs,

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31716A 1 hr \$12	31708A 3 hrs \$17	31690A 3 hrs \$17	31674A 3 hrs \$16.99	31724A 3 hrs \$16.99	31682A 4 1/2 hrs \$22	31609A 4 1/2 hrs \$24	31112A 3 hrs \$16	31617A 3 hrs \$17	31625A 3 hrs \$17
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**You May Not Have Time To Read Them
 But You Will Have Time To Hear Them**

but remained apart; Young seemed to get into enough trouble on his own. He dated many attractive women, lived a fast life, and slowly acquired a criminal record—nothing violent, just misdemeanors for driving without a license, for possession of marijuana, for taking a girlfriend's stereo. He also earned two felony convictions: one at the age of twenty-one, for attempting to pass a fraudulent prescription, and the other at the age of twenty-five, for possession of a few amphetamines and Quaaludes. Each felony brought a suspended sentence, probation, and a one-dollar fine. When Ernest Montgomery called, Mark Young was rebuilding motorcycles, selling used cars wholesale, and looking for new income. He had held a financial interest in a number of massage parlors, which were now closed. His dream was to get some money, move to Florida, build custom Harleys, and work part-time as a fishing guide on Lake Okeechobee.

Claude Atkinson, Ernest Montgomery, and Mark Young met in the family room of Young's house in early October. The price of the marijuana was set at \$1,200 a pound. If Young found buyers, he would receive a commission of \$100 for every pound sold. Not long after, Atkinson and Montgomery returned to Young's house, where they were introduced to two men from Florida who were acting on behalf of someone seeking to buy all the marijuana the group could supply. Atkinson offered a hundred pounds a week; the marijuana was still being manicured and could not be delivered all at once. Within days a man from New York arrived at Young's house with \$120,000 in a cardboard box. While the New York buyer inspected the marijuana at Montgomery's Indianapolis house, Atkinson remained behind, counting the money. The deal was completed, and Young was handed \$10,000 in cash. The New York buyer eventually paid for 600 more pounds, in transactions that took place at Montgomery's house. By Christmas all the high-quality marijuana was gone, the last 200 pounds either distributed to workers who had helped with various tasks or sold to an acquaintance of Montgomery's in Illinois.

The town of Eminence, Indiana, is about twenty-five miles west of Indianapolis. Near its only intersection is a Citizens Bank, a small church, a convenience store, and a post office built of concrete blocks and painted royal blue. The town boasts 180 inhabitants and looks as though it has not seen much new construction since the interval between the world wars. There are countless small towns like Eminence across the Midwest, slightly faded but still eulogized as the heartland of this country. To reach the farm used by R.P.Z. Investments, one must leave Eminence on a narrow country road and then turn onto a dirt road and drive for a long stretch, past fields of fifty to a hundred acres where corn, hay, soybeans, and wheat are grown, past modest farms with collapsing outbuildings, an occasional trailer home, and rusted cars on cinder blocks. Farther west the land is flat, the acreage of each plot enormous, but here the countryside feels long settled, with hedges and trees marking

boundary lines. After cleaning out the barn, Atkinson and Montgomery allowed the lease on Martha Brummett's property to expire. The one-story farmhouse has been painted beige by its latest occupants; the barn remains bright red. There is a porch on the front of the house, an enclosed patio on one side, and a swing set on the lawn. Looking at this humble farm, one would hardly believe that more than a million dollars' worth of marijuana had been grown there in the space of about three months.

INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

STEVE White looks like an ordinary Indiana farmer, with slightly unkempt hair, a graying beard, teeth stained by nicotine, and strong hands. The day we met, he wore an old flannel shirt, gray pants, and battered work boots. His voice has a low rural twang. He seems to belong in an old pickup, riding through a vast dusty field. White is the Indiana coordinator for the Drug Enforcement Administration's Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program. Of his twenty-six years in federal law enforcement, twenty-one have been spent in Indiana, working undercover. He knows the state backwards and forwards—has walked it, driven it, and flown low over it every summer, scrutinizing hills and farmland. Nobody ever thinks he is a cop. He gets along well with rural people. He grew up in New York City and attended P.S. 20; his father worked on Wall Street. He travels to London each year to indulge a passion for collecting English antique toy soldiers. Special Agent White would be an implausible character in any work of fiction. Savvy, articulate, self-deprecating, and blunt, he defies easy categorization and probably knows more about growing marijuana than most of the people he arrests.

Claude Atkinson was an extremely talented grower with a "good product," White says—and "a super salesman." The operation near Eminence was of average size for its time. It is difficult, even from the air, to find marijuana hidden in corn: "Remember *North by Northwest*?" White says. "Cary Grant in the cornfield? We don't have cornfields like that anymore, with wide rows. They broadcast the stuff, and it's just thicker than hell." Sometimes patches of marijuana will be distributed here and there amid hundreds of acres. Discovering one may not lead to the others. Growers tend to be much more concerned about hiding their marijuana from thieves than from the government. A rural underworld has emerged around marijuana, secretive and unknown to outsiders; booby traps are laid in cornfields. There is now a group of people in the Marijuana Belt, known as "patch pirates," who earn a living solely by stealing marijuana from growers, whom they follow. White acknowledges that the booby traps are usually aimed at patch pirates, not his own men; nevertheless, fishhooks strung at eye level on fishing line are nondiscriminatory. Outdoor marijuana farms have become smaller in the past few years, though last summer



White's agents found "60,000 beautiful plants" on a farm in Tippecanoe County. The case proved a disappointment: the DEA never found the grower. "What I want is bodies," White explains. "I don't give a damn about the dope—that's just something we're going to burn up." His job involves a daily cat-and-mouse pursuit of marijuana growers, with both sides changing tactics, adopting new technologies, and often, after an arrest, amicably discussing tricks of the trade. White harbors no animosity toward his prey. "These are not heroin or cocaine dealers," he says. "They're not violent. I find a lot of them personally engaging." What they are doing is against the law, however, and White loves tracking them down. He has had a good deal of success lately. In 1992 Indiana led the nation in federal arrests for marijuana. Last year it ranked third.

Take a map of the United States and draw a circle, including within its circumference Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, with portions of Ohio to the east, Kentucky and Tennessee to the south, and Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska to the west. The region within that circle, Steve White believes, is producing the majority of the marijuana grown in the United States. The highest-quality marijuana is cultivated indoors on the West Coast, but for sheer volume, no other area surpasses the U.S. heartland. White does not find this surprising. During the Second World War the U.S. government encouraged

farmers throughout the Corn Belt to plant almost 300,000 acres of marijuana, in the hopes of replacing fiber supplies from Asia which had been cut off by the Japanese. The program, whose slogan was "Hemp for Victory," turned out to be a financial disaster and left marijuana growing wild throughout the region. Known as ditchweed, this marijuana now blankets tens of thousands of acres. For years it had a negligible delta-9-THC content, and was used mainly as filler by drug dealers, but there is evidence that the ditchweed may be cross-pollinating with the potent marijuana now cultivated outdoors. The same growing conditions and soil that are ideal for corn are also ideal for marijuana. Most local sheriff's departments employ only three to five officers, with more important things to do than hunt for marijuana. And over the past fifteen years there have been a lot of people with strong agricultural skills who have badly needed money—or have wanted more of it than almost any other job in the region could provide. A bushel of corn sells for roughly \$2.50, a bushel of manicured marijuana for about \$70,000. White thinks that marijuana is the largest cash crop in the United States, and if not the largest in Indiana, then right up there with corn and soybeans. Though he is proud of what his office has accomplished, White has no illusions: "There's more than we think."

During the 1960s and early 1970s nearly all the marijuana

smoked in the United States was imported, mainly from Mexico, Colombia, and Jamaica. Domestic production rose in reaction to a number of events. The spraying of an herbicide, paraquat, over Mexican marijuana fields, begun in 1975, created uneasiness about that nation's product. Successful interdiction efforts by the U.S. Border Patrol and the Coast Guard made smuggling marijuana more difficult. And the tougher legal sanctions against trafficking led some foreign drug dealers to switch from marijuana, a bulk agricultural good with a strong smell, to cocaine, which is easier to conceal and brings a far higher return per pound. As marijuana prices rose, American growers responded to consumer demand. Mark A.R. Kleiman, an associate professor at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, finds this to be a rare instance in which protectionism actually worked. The anti-drug movement and the burgeoning American marijuana crop led the DEA to devote more of its resources to marijuana investigations. Kleiman estimates that by 1988 federal anti-marijuana efforts totaled approximately \$970 million—about 20 to 25 percent of all federal drug-enforcement expenditures. By 1992 federal convictions for marijuana outnumbered those for heroin, crack cocaine, and LSD combined. The DEA's Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program began in 1979 in two states, California and Hawaii; it now looks for marijuana-farming operations—called “grows” or “gardens” by members of the trade—in all fifty states.

No one knows exactly how much marijuana is cultivated in the United States. The numbers published by the government—or anyone else—are largely speculative. In 1992 the DEA eradicated 3,405 metric tons of cultivated marijuana in the United States, an amount the DEA says represents more than half the total domestic output. Critics believe that the DEA actually finds only 10 to 20 percent of the marijuana being grown in this country. With prices ranging from \$500 a pound, for low-quality New Mexican marijuana, to more than \$5,000 a pound for “boutique” strains like Northern Lights and Afghan Kush, it can be confidently stated that the black market for American marijuana, whatever the actual tonnage, is immense.

Growers are increasingly moving their crops indoors, using artificial light and hydroponics, to avoid theft, reduce the risk of detection, control the growing process, and profit from up to six harvests a year. Thirty mature plants can easily be grown in an area the size of a bathtub. I asked Steve White to list some of the places where he has discovered indoor grow operations. He laughed. “It would be tough for me to say places we haven't found them.” Often a false wall hides a grow room in a house, or a house's foundation doesn't match its basement, which seems oddly smaller, or there are second stories with no stairwells, or crawl spaces are hidden beneath floors. Once White rummaged through a child's closet and found the entrance to a grow area behind the toys. Without need of a search warrant, the DEA employs thermal-imaging devices, mounted on helicopters and

low-flying airplanes, to detect abnormal heat sources that may indicate the presence of an indoor growing operation—or a pottery kiln, or a Jacuzzi. What is found depends upon the skill of the technician. White has learned that one of the best ways to find an indoor grow area is with his nose: no matter how well-vented the operation, and despite electronic devices that can neutralize odors in the air, marijuana will exude a powerful scent. A few years ago indoor grows were often huge. A group of janitors in Anderson, Indiana, who had traveled to Israel to study hydroponics, were caught with 8,100 plants in a building with walls constructed a foot thick to thwart infrared detection. Nowadays growers rent storage units and apartments, using phony names and paying in cash, and build small grow operations at different locations, with timing devices and automatic controls. The authorities may find one or two—a loss anticipated in the grower's business plan—without being able to trace ownership.

White has smoked marijuana once, while working undercover, and did not enjoy the experience. He chain-smokes cigarettes, regrets it, and sees no need to add marijuana to the nation's list of legal drugs. “We've got tobacco, we've got alcohol,” he said. “Jesus Christ, do we need another hallucinogenic, carcinogenic substance on the market?” What disturbs him most about marijuana is the phenomenal sums of money it funnels into an underground economy, and the great resulting potential for corruption among public officials. I asked whether a sense of futility ever creeps into his work, given the extent of cultivation in his state. “I'm not such a fool as to sit here and tell you that we're going to wipe out marijuana,” he replied. But there is no doubt in his mind that the DEA exerts a deterrent effect. “Every time we have a helicopter go up on a mission,” White said, “there's someone down below who sees it and thinks, ‘Maybe I better not.’”

Ralph Weisheit, a professor of criminal justice at Illinois State University, does not know Steve White but has come to many of the same conclusions about marijuana cultivation in the Midwest. Weisheit first became interested in the subject eight years ago, when he saw, on the television news, an old Illinois farmer being arrested for cultivating marijuana. The farmer and his son never smoked marijuana; they grew it to save their farm from foreclosure. Weisheit was intrigued. With a grant from the research arm of the U.S. Justice Department, he conducted a two-year study of marijuana cultivation, interviewing law-enforcement officials in five states and dozens of Illinois growers who had been caught and convicted. The book based on that study, *Domestic Marijuana: A Neglected Industry* (1992), chronicles the rise of marijuana production in the United States and offers a fascinating portrait of the growers. Weisheit agrees that the majority of marijuana grown in America probably originates in the nine-state region described by Steve White. He also thinks that marijuana is the nation's largest cash crop, by a very wide margin.

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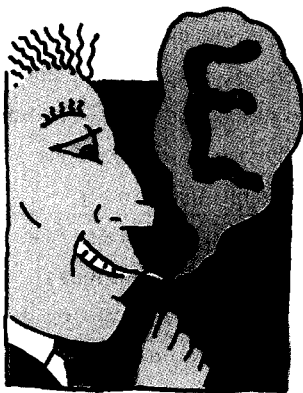
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Estimates of how many Americans grow marijuana range from one to three million, of which anywhere from 100,000 to 200,000 are commercial growers. Weisheit found that aside from being predominantly white and male, marijuana growers generally do not fit any common stereotypes. Some are pragmatists, growing the drug purely for the money; during the farm crisis of the 1980s many farmers in the Marijuana Belt started cultivating marijuana out of desperation. They found it not only easy money but also easy work. As one farmer told Weisheit, "You know, I spent most of my life trying to kill weeds, so trying to keep one alive was hardly a challenge." Other growers are hustlers by nature, classic American entrepreneurs; they might as well be selling timeshares in a vacation condominium. They try to build marijuana empires. The risks of the trade only add to its appeal. Other growers are less competitive, giving away marijuana to friends or selling it at slightly above cost, sharing agricultural techniques, comparing their crops the way neighbors might compare homegrown tomatoes. Marijuana growers are educated and uneducated, liberal and conservative. They are ex-

LATE one night I met a commercial marijuana grower who introduced himself as "Dave." He has been growing marijuana on and off for more than a decade, beginning outdoors and graduating to a series of increasingly complex indoor grow systems. Understandably paranoid and suspicious, Dave is also quite proud of his work and regrets being unable to discuss it with friends. His grow operation had to be built surreptitiously, over a period of weeks, like a factory assembled by hand. It utilizes about \$50,000 worth of high-tech hydroponic equipment. When the construction was complete, the whole thing looked so beautiful that Dave wanted to throw an opening-night party, but he decided that would not be a good idea. Though he always hated gardening and never passed a science class in his life, he now has a grasp of marijuana botany, plant biology, and advanced greenhouse-management techniques which only Special Agent White could fully appreciate. As he smoked some of his most recent harvest, Dave shared with me some of the pleasures, risks, rewards, and bizarre phenomena associated with his profession.



ESTIMATES OF HOW MANY AMERICANS GROW

MARIJUANA RANGE FROM ONE TO THREE MILLION. FROM

100,000 TO 200,000 ARE COMMERCIAL GROWERS.

tremely secretive, worrying more about thieves than about the police. Few belong to NORML (the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) and few read *High Times* magazine or add their names to any list that might arouse suspicion. Indoor growing often attracts people who love gizmos. There are endless contraptions that can be added to a grow room, from computer-controlled watering systems to electric tables that distribute nutrients evenly by tilting back and forth. Some growers become connoisseurs, producing high-quality marijuana in small quantities, manipulating not only the level of delta-9-THC through cross-breeding but also the proportions of all the other cannabinoids to subtly—or not so subtly—affect the nature of the high. Weisheit met growers and law-enforcement officers alike who were extraordinarily passionate about marijuana, eager to discuss its arcane details for hours. He was surprised, after the publication of his book, by how little controversy it generated in either camp. His mother was disturbed, however, by one of its central implications: "She's very anti-drug," Weisheit says, "and her comment was, 'The thing I don't like about this book is that it makes these people seem so normal.'"

Hidden behind a fake wall, entered through a secret door, in a neighborhood where you would never, ever, expect to find it, Dave's operation is much larger than most. There are hundreds of marijuana plants in long rows, growing from cubes of rock wool, a soil-less medium spun from synthetic fibers, connected through an intricate system of white plastic pipes. Suspended above them are extremely bright high-pressure sodium lights, which require a surge of power from special ballasts to start up. On the ceiling is the bluish flame of a carbon-dioxide generator burning natural gas. The windows have been sealed and blacked out. The room is quite warm, the air thick and humid, the whole place filled with a pungent smell reminiscent of fresh hay. Like a greenhouse without glass, it feels very still and quiet, except for the sound of water rushing through narrow pipes.

When everything is running smoothly, Dave controls the elements necessary for his plants: air, light, heat, and water. In a closed chamber there is no wind; here a ventilation system provides it, circulating air rich in carbon dioxide. When outdoor temperatures drop too low, Dave uses the CO₂ generator on the ceiling—in effect "fertilizing the air." Pumps

and timers automatically water the plants, also delivering nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, which would normally be derived from soil. One of the critical factors in growing marijuana is the proportion of darkness to light. Sometimes Dave's high-pressure sodium lights burn eighteen hours a day, raising the temperature in the grow room to as high as 110°. During the female plant's reproductive stage there must be long periods of total, uninterrupted darkness. As little as two footcandles of light can disrupt the delicate process by which delta-9-THC accumulates in the buds. Turning on a flashlight at the wrong moment, Dave says, is enough to ruin his plants.

He is truly a connoisseur, growing an expensive strain of marijuana from the northern Hindu Kush. As he describes how some outdoor growers stuff marijuana into plastic garbage bags while it is still wet, he grimaces, like a master vintner appalled by the improper handling of grapes. The buds are very fragile, he says: "You're trying to coax this mature flower to retain its essence—and then store it and seal it at that instant in time." His finished product is deep green and aromatic, like some rare, exotic spice.

Growing marijuana indoors requires much more work than cultivating it outdoors. There is also more potential for disaster. A splash of liquid on a hot light will cause it to explode. A broken pipe can flood the room with hundreds of gallons of water. A power outage shuts the whole system down. The nutrient solution, if improperly monitored, can quickly turn too acidic and, as Dave puts it, "give the plants a heart attack." More common, and yet somehow more surreal, are insect infestations that can harm valuable young plants. Dave has battled spider mites, greenhouse whiteflies, and aphids. Insecticides are not an option in an enclosed room, with a crop that will be smoked. Dave uses biological controls, unleashing hungry young predators upon unwanted bugs. Recently he released thousands of miniature wasps. This is insanity, he thought; but it worked. Inside a nearby refrigerator he always keeps 500 ladybug eggs, next to the soda, in case of an emergency. At the moment Dave is contending with gnats, who leave his plants alone but swarm and bite him as he walks about the grow room in the dark.

SOMEONE AT THE DOOR

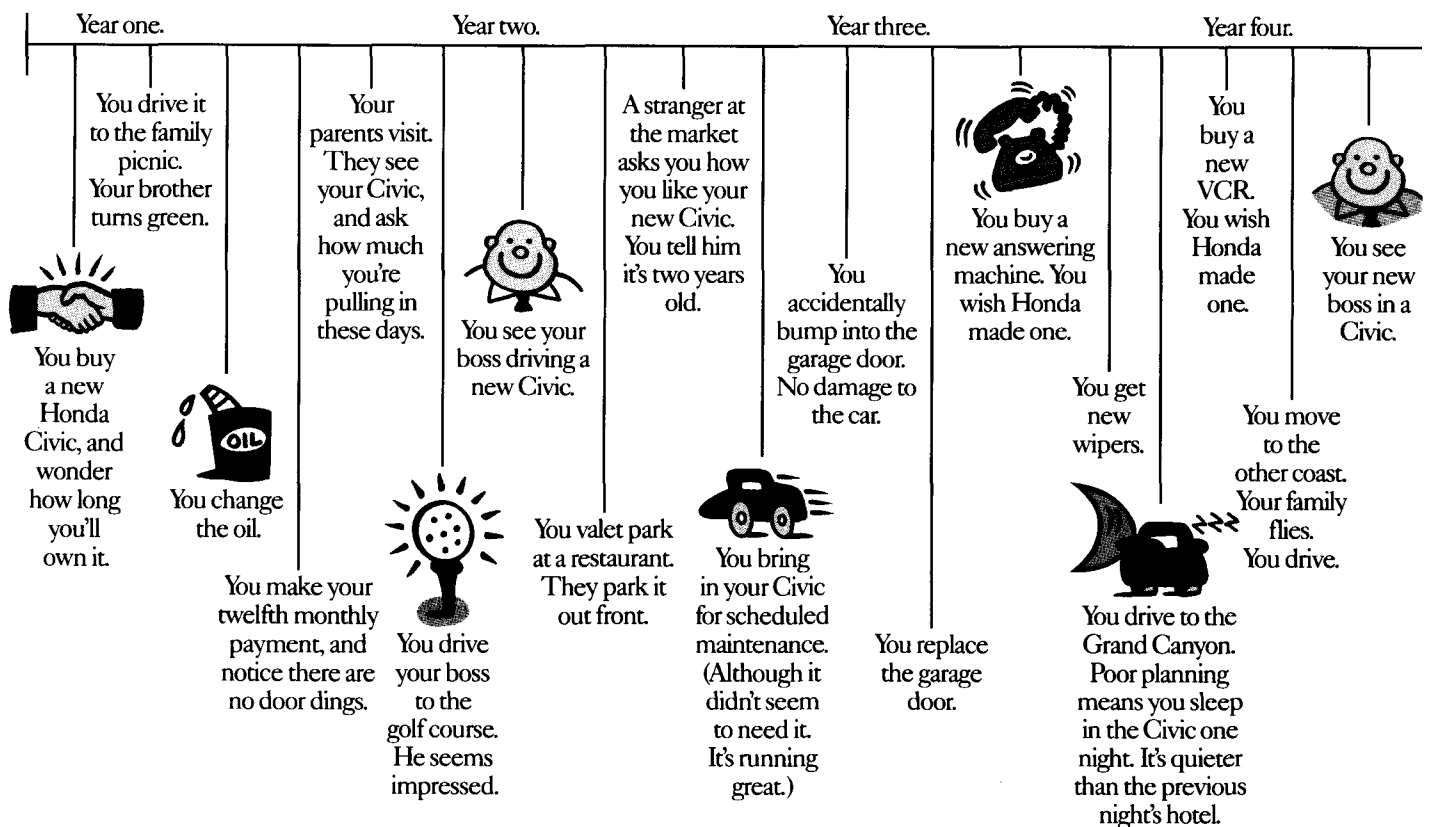
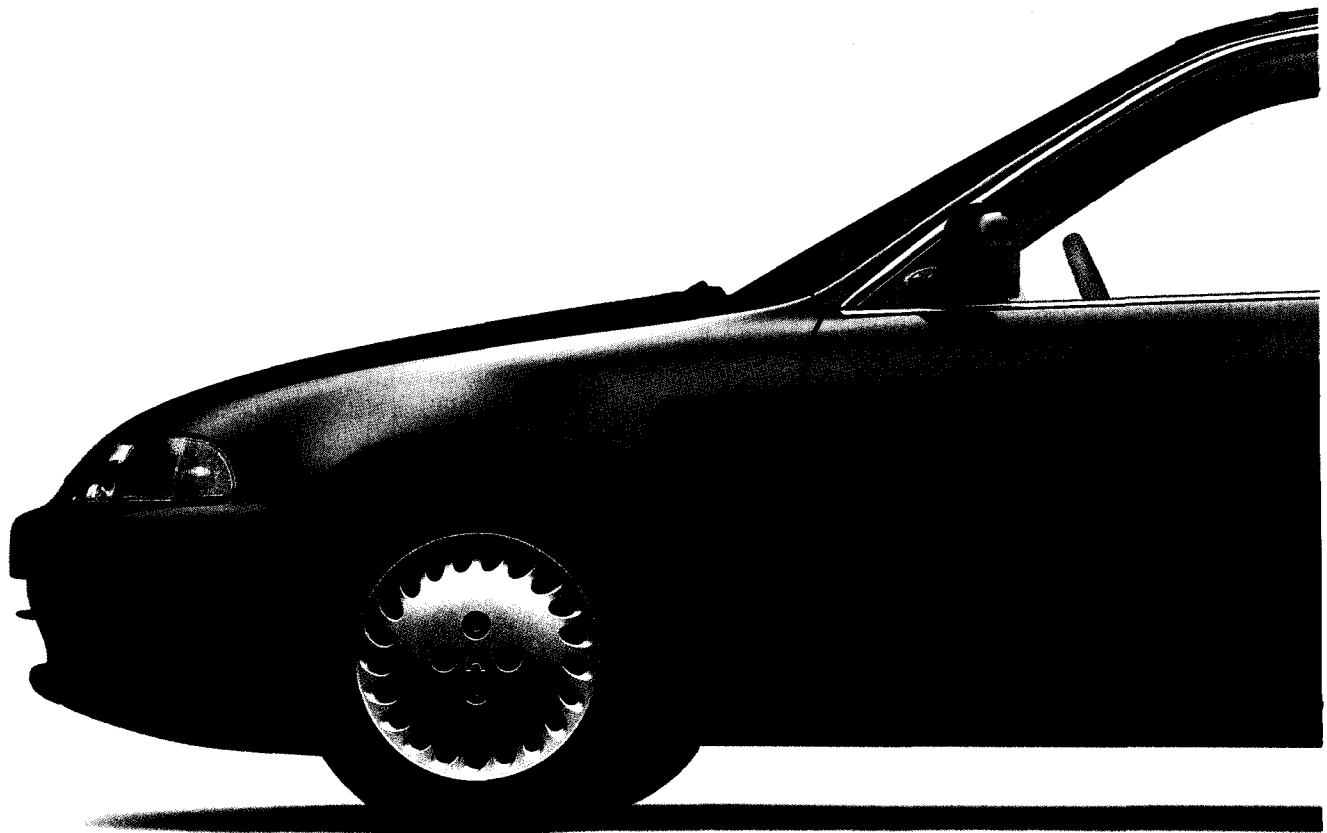
ON March 18, 1990, a pair of deputy sheriffs in Johnson County, Indiana, spotted a red Jeep being driven erratically and signaled for its driver to pull off the road. Behind the wheel they found Jerry Montgomery, obviously intoxicated; littering the truck were three empty vodka bottles, a five-gallon bucket full of marijuana, and a gray box containing more than \$13,000 in cash. After obtaining a war-

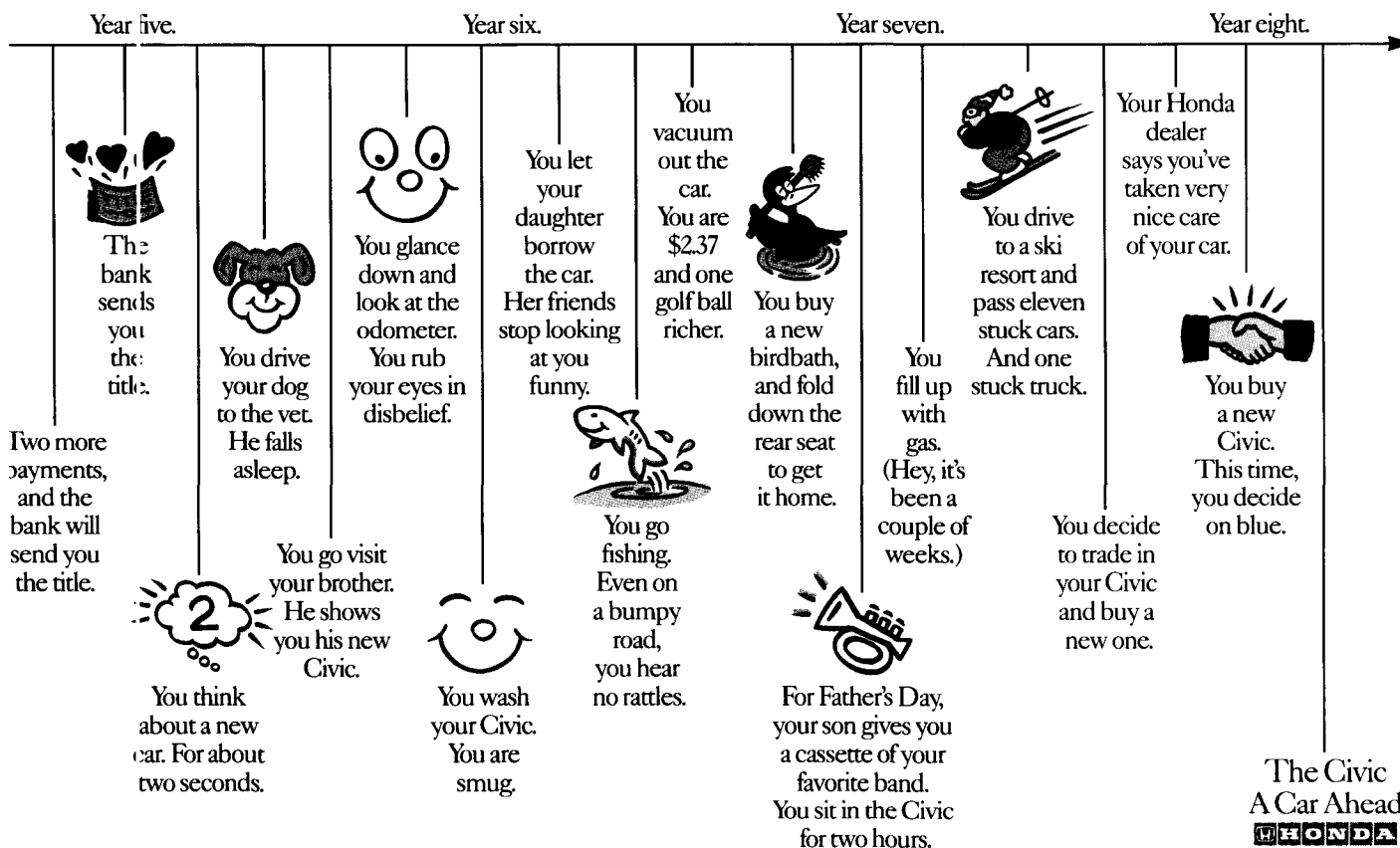
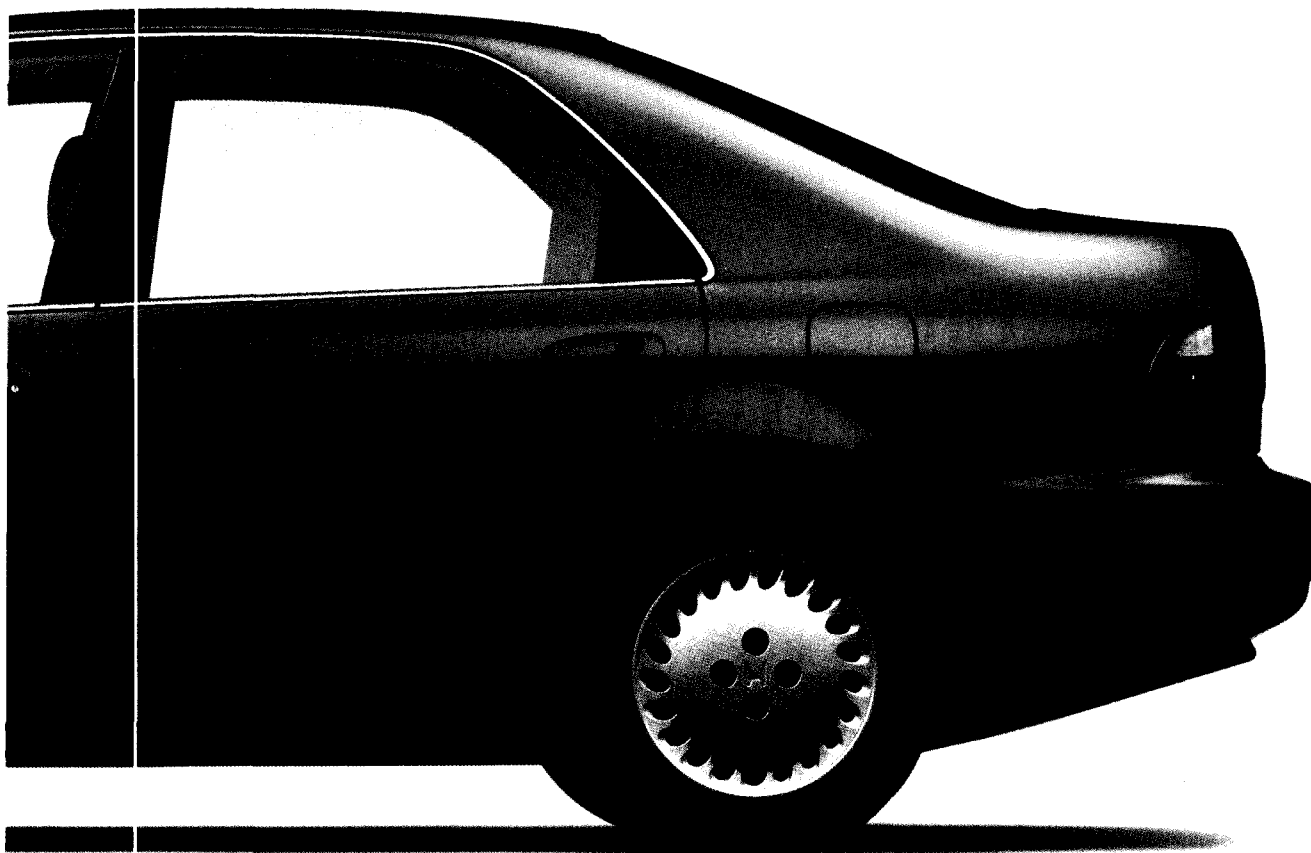
rant, sheriffs searched Montgomery's house, finding more marijuana and a locked briefcase hidden under his bed. Deputy John Myers pried it open with a screwdriver. In the briefcase were receipts for farm equipment; documents mentioning R.P.Z. Investments, Claude Atkinson, and Ernest Montgomery; an option to buy a property owned by Martha Brummett; and a number of books suggesting that this arrest was the beginning, not the end, of a trail: *Indoor Marijuana Horticulture*, *The Primo Plant*, and *How to Grow Marijuana Indoors Under Lights*.

The investigation eventually led authorities to a 500-acre farm close to Solsberry, in Greene County, owned by Arno Zepp, of Investment Holdings, Inc. On August 22 federal, state, and local law-enforcement agents arrested Claude Atkinson, raided the farm, and, with the help of volunteers from the Indiana National Guard, destroyed 10,000 marijuana plants. Atkinson soon began to talk. In May of 1991 Ernest Montgomery was arrested at his Gosport cabin, where 7,000 marijuana seedlings sat in little pots, ready for planting. Early that same morning Mark Young was awakened by someone at the front door. Unlike his former business associates, Young was not growing anything. He and his girlfriend, Patricia, were in the process of moving to Florida. When he saw a man with a badge and a gun, Young had no idea what was happening, but assumed that it must have something to do with unpaid taxes.

More than a dozen law-enforcement officers surrounded the house. Their commander, a DEA agent, treated Young politely, allowing him to get dressed and agreeing not to handcuff him in front of the neighbors. At the station Young read his indictment. He was being charged, under federal law, not only for his role in distributing 700 pounds of marijuana but also for conspiring to manufacture all 12,500 marijuana plants grown on Martha Brummett's farm. Young was unaware of the punishment he might face until later that day. John Hollywood, a bail bondsman in Indianapolis, arrived in the afternoon to secure his release. But the government refused to set bail. Under Indiana's strict state law, the same charges would bring a maximum sentence of twenty-eight years—at most, fourteen years served in prison, and probably much less. But under federal law Young's two prior state felony convictions, one of them more than seventeen years old, classified him as a career drug offender. This arrest could prove his third strike. At the U.S. attorney's discretion, he faced a possible mandatory-minimum sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of parole. ☼

This is the first part of a two-part article. Part Two, next month, will describe the disposition of the Young case and the perverse consequences of a legal regime that decrees mandatory-minimum sentences.





*Though it is commonly believed
that American health-care delivery
and research benefit men at
the expense of women, the truth
appears to be exactly
the opposite*

The Sex-Bias Myth in Medicine

by ANDREW G. KADAR, M.D.

“WHEN it comes to health-care research and delivery, women can no longer be treated as second-class citizens.” So said the President of the United States on October 18, 1993.

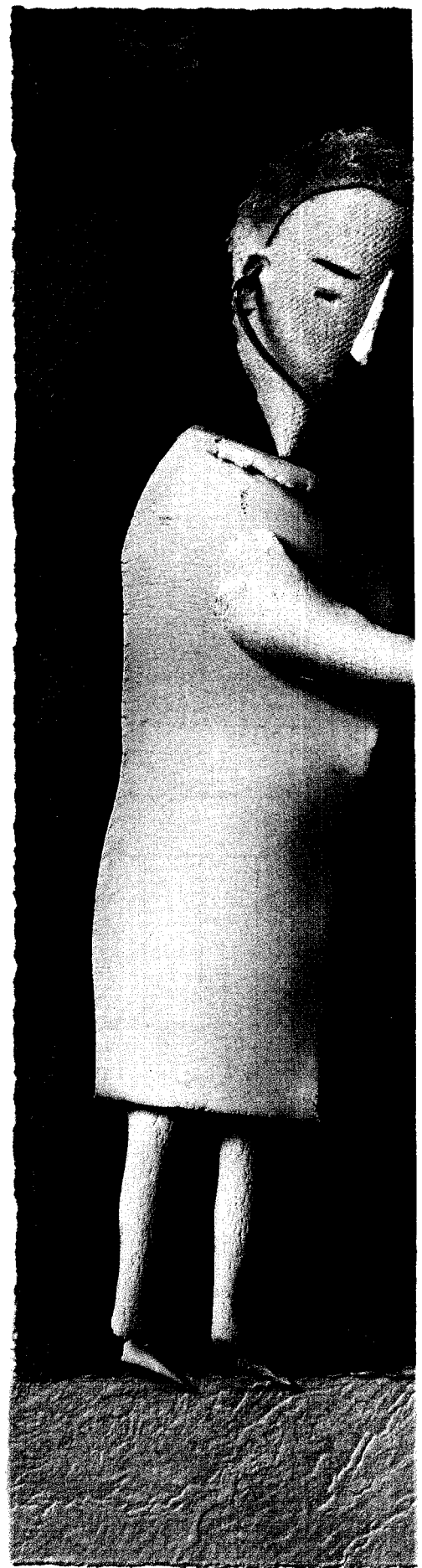
He and the First Lady had just hosted a reception for the National Breast Cancer Coalition, an advocacy group, after receiving a petition containing 2.6 million signatures which demanded increased funding for breast-cancer prevention and treatment. While the Clintons met with leaders of the group in the East Room of the White House, a thousand demonstrators rallied across the street in support. The President echoed their call, decrying the neglect of medical care for women.

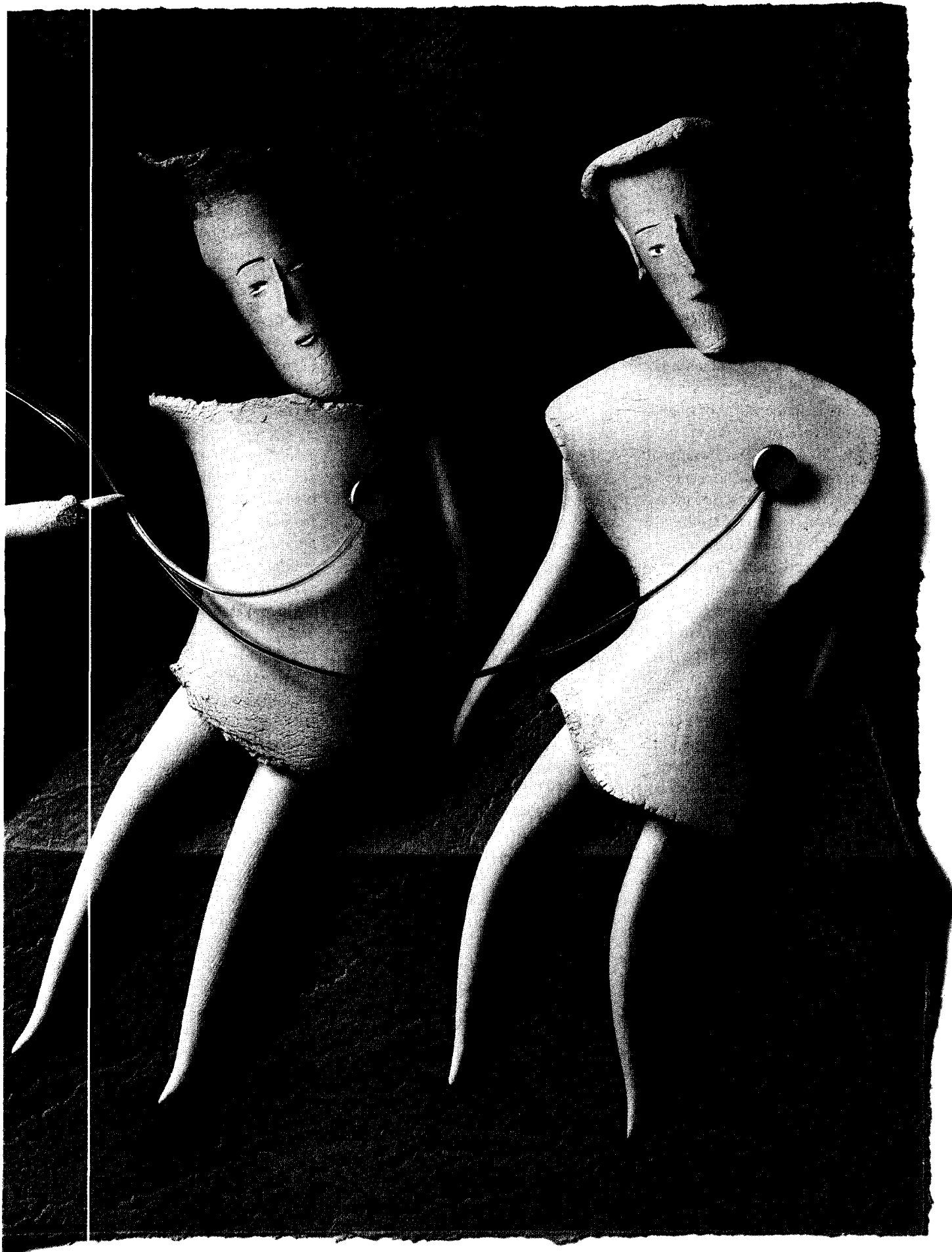
Two years earlier Bernadine Healy, then the director of the National Institutes of Health, charged that “women have all too often been treated less than equally in . . . health care.” More recently Representative Pat Schroeder, a

co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues, sponsored legislation to “ensure that biomedical research does not once again overlook women and their health.” Newspaper articles expressed similar sentiments.

The list of accusations is long and startling. Women’s-health-care advocates indict “sex-biased” doctors for stereotyping women as hysterical hypochondriacs, for taking women’s complaints less seriously than men’s, and for giving them less thorough diagnostic workups. A study conducted at the University of California at San Diego in 1979 concluded that men’s complaints of back pain, chest pain, dizziness, fatigue, and headache more often resulted in extensive workups than did similar complaints from women. Hard scientific evidence therefore seemed to confirm women’s anecdotal reports.

Men more often than women undergo angiographies and coronary-artery-bypass-graft operations. Even though heart





disease is the No. 1 killer of women as well as men, this sophisticated, state-of-the-art technology, critics contend, is selectively denied to women.

The problem is said to be repeated in medical research: women, critics argue, are routinely ignored in favor of men. When the NIH inventoried all the research it had funded in 1987, the money spent on studying diseases unique to women amounted to only 13.5 percent of the total research budget.

Perhaps the most emotionally charged disease for women is breast cancer. If a tumor devastated men on a similar scale, critics say, we would declare a state of national emergency and launch a no-cost-barred Apollo Project-style program to cure it. In the words of Matilda Cuomo, the wife of the governor of New York, "If we can send a woman to the moon, we can surely find a cure for breast cancer." The neglect of breast-cancer research, we have been told, is both sexist and a national disgrace.

Nearly all heart-disease research is said to be conducted on men, with the conclusions blindly generalized to women. In July of 1989 researchers from the Harvard Medical School reported the results of a five-year study on the effects of aspirin in preventing cardiovascular disease in 22,071 male physicians. Thousands of men were studied, but not one woman: women's health, critics charge, was obviously not considered important enough to explore similarly. Here, they say, we have definite, smoking-gun evidence of the neglect of women in medical research—only one example of a widespread, dangerous phenomenon.

Still another difference: pharmaceutical companies make a policy of giving new drugs to men first, while women wait to benefit from the advances. And even then the medicines are often inadequately tested on women.

To remedy all this neglect, we need to devote preferential attention and funds, in the words of the *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, to "the greatest resource this

country will ever have, namely, the health of its women." Discrimination on such a large scale cries out for restitution—if the charges are true.

In fact one sex does appear to be favored in the amount of attention devoted to its medical needs. In the United States it is estimated that one sex spends twice as much money on health care as the other does. The NIH also spends twice as much money on research into the diseases specific to one sex as it does on research into those specific to the other, and only one sex has a section of the NIH devoted entirely to the study of diseases afflicting it. That sex is not men, however. It is women.

IN the United States women seek out and consequently receive more medical care than men. This is true even if pregnancy-related care is excluded. Department of Health and Human Services surveys show that women visit doctors more often than men, are hospitalized more often, and undergo more operations. Women are more likely than men to visit a doctor for a general physical exam when they are feeling well, and complain of symptoms more often. Thus two out of every three health-care dollars are spent by women.

Quantity, of course, does not guarantee quality. Do women receive second-rate diagnostic workups?

The 1979 San Diego study, which concluded that men's complaints more often led to extensive workups than did women's, used the charts of 104 men and women (fifty-two married couples) as data. This small-scale regional survey prompted a more extensive national review of 46,868 office visits. The results, reported in 1981, were quite different from those of the San Diego study.

In this larger, more representative sample, the care received by men and women was similar about two thirds of the time. When the care was different, women overall received more diagnostic tests and treatment—more lab tests,

blood-pressure checks, drug prescriptions, and return appointments.

Several other, small-scale studies have weighed in on both sides of this issue. The San Diego researchers looked at another 200 men and women in 1984, and this time found "no significant differences in the extent and content" of workups. Some women's-health-care advocates have chosen to ignore data from the second San Diego study and the national survey while touting the first study as evidence that doctors, to quote once again from the *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, do "not take complaints as seriously" when they come from women: "an example of a double standard influencing diagnostic workups."

When prescribing care for heart disease, doctors consider such factors as age, other medical problems, and the likelihood that the patient will benefit from testing and surgery. Coronary-artery disease afflicts men at a much younger age, killing them three times as often as women until age sixty-five. Younger patients have fewer additional medical problems that preclude aggressive, high-risk procedures. And smaller patients have smaller coronary arteries, which become obstructed more often after surgery. Whereas this is true for both sexes, obviously more women fit into the smaller-patient category. When these differences are factored in, sex divergence in cardiac care begins to fade away.

To the extent that divergence remains, women may be getting better treatment. At least that was the conclusion of a University of North Carolina/Duke University study that looked at the records of 5,795 patients treated from 1969 to 1984. The most symptomatic and severely diseased men and women were equally likely to be referred for bypass surgery. Among the patients with less-severe disease—the ones to whom surgery offers little or no survival benefit over medical therapy—women were less likely to be scheduled for bypass surgery. This seems proper in light of the greater risk of surgical complications, owing to women's smaller coronary arteries. In



fact, the researchers questioned the wisdom of surgery in the less symptomatic men and suggested that "the effect of gender on treatment selection may have led to more appropriate treatment of women."

As for sophisticated, pioneering technology selectively designed for the benefit of one sex, laparoscopic surgery was largely confined to gynecology for more than twenty years. Using viewing and manipulating instruments that can be inserted into the abdomen through keyhole-sized incisions, doctors are able to diagnose and repair, sparing the patient a larger incision and a longer, more painful recuperation. Laparoscopic tubal sterilization, first performed in 1936, became common practice in the late 1960s. Over time the development of more-versatile instruments and of fiber-optic video capability made possible the performance of more-complex operations. The laparoscopic removal of ectopic pregnancy was reported in 1973. Finally, in 1987, the same technology was applied in gallbladder surgery, and men began to enjoy its benefits too.

Years after ultrasound instruments were designed to look inside the uterus, the same technology was adapted to search for tumors in the prostate. Other pioneering developments conceived to improve the health care of women include mammography, bone-density testing for osteoporosis, surgery to alleviate bladder incontinence, hormone therapy to relieve the symptoms of menopause, and a host of procedures, including in vitro fertilization, developed to facilitate impregnation. Perhaps so many new developments occur in women's health care because one branch of medicine and a group of doctors, gynecologists, are explicitly concerned with the health of women. No corresponding group of doctors is dedicated to the care of men.

So women receive more care than men, sometimes receive better care than men, and benefit more than men do from some developing technologies. This hardly looks like proof that women's health is viewed as secondary in importance to men's health.

THE 1987 NIH inventory did indeed find that only 13.5 percent of the NIH research budget was devoted to studying diseases unique to women. But 80 percent of the budget went into research for the benefit of both sexes, including basic research in fields such as genetics and immunology and also research into diseases such as lymphoma, arthritis, and sickle-cell anemia. Both men and women suffer from these ailments, and both sexes served as study subjects. The remaining 6.5 percent of NIH research funds were devoted to afflictions unique to men. Oddly, the women's 13.5 percent has been cited as evidence of neglect. The much smaller men's share of the budget is rarely mentioned in these references.

As for breast cancer, the second most lethal malignancy in females, investigation in that field has long received more funding from the National Cancer Institute than any other tumor research, though lung cancer heads the list of fatal tumors for both sexes. The second most lethal malignancy in males is also a sex-specific tumor: prostate cancer. Last year approximately 46,000 women succumbed to breast cancer and 35,000 men to prostate cancer; the NCI spent \$213.7 million on breast-cancer research and \$51.1 million on study of the prostate. Thus although about a third more women died of breast cancer than men of prostate cancer, breast-cancer research received more than four times the funding. More than three times as much money per fatality was spent on the women's disease. Breast cancer accounted for 8.8 percent of cancer fatalities in the United States and for 13 percent of the NCI research budget; the corresponding figures for prostate cancer were 6.7 percent of fatalities and three percent of the funding. The spending for breast-cancer research is projected to increase by 23 percent this year, to \$262.9 million; prostate-research spending will increase by 7.6 percent, to \$55 million.

The female cancers of the cervix and

the uterus accounted for 10,100 deaths and \$48.5 million in research last year, and ovarian cancer accounted for 13,300 deaths and \$32.5 million in research. Thus the research funding for all female-specific cancers is substantially larger per fatality than the funding for prostate cancer.

Is this level of spending on women's health just a recent development, needed to make up for years of prior neglect? The NCI is divided into sections dealing with issues such as cancer biology and diagnosis, prevention and control, etiology, and treatment. Until funding allocations for sex-specific concerns became a



political issue, in the mid-1980s, the NCI did not track organ-specific spending data. The earliest information now available was reconstructed retroactively to 1981. Nevertheless, these early data provide a window on spending patterns in the era before political pressure began to intensify for more research on women. Each year from 1981 to 1985 funding for breast-cancer research exceeded funding for prostate cancer by a ratio of roughly five to one. A rational, nonpolitical explanation for this is that breast cancer attacks a larger number of patients, at a younger age. In any event, the data fail to support claims that women were neglected in that era.

Again, most medical research is conducted on diseases that afflict both sexes. Women's-health advocates charge that we collect data from studies of men and then extrapolate to women. A look at the actual data reveals a different reality.

The best-known and most ambitious study of cardiovascular health over time began in the town of Framingham, Massachusetts, in 1948. Researchers started with 2,336 men and 2,873 women aged thirty to sixty-two, and have followed the survivors of this group with biennial physical exams and lab tests for more than forty-five years. In this and many other observational studies women have been well represented.

With respect to the aspirin study, the

researchers at Harvard Medical School did not focus exclusively on men. Both sexes were studied nearly concurrently. The men's study was more rigorous, because it was placebo-controlled (that is, some subjects were randomly assigned to receive placebos instead of aspirin); the women's study was based on responses to questionnaires sent to nurses and a review of medical records. The women's study, however, followed nearly four times as many subjects as the men's study (87,678 versus 22,071), and it followed its subjects for a year longer (six versus five) than the men's study did. The results of the men's study were reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in July of 1989 and prompted charges of sexism in medical research. The women's-study results were printed in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in July of 1991, and were generally ignored by the nonmedical press.

Most studies on the prevention of "premature" (occurring in people under age sixty-five) coronary-artery disease have, in fact, been conducted on men. Since middle-aged women have a much lower incidence of this illness than their male counterparts (they provide less than a third as many cases), documenting the preventive effect of a given treatment in these women is much more difficult. More experiments were conducted on men not because women were considered less important but because women suffer less from this disease. Older women do develop coronary disease (albeit at a lower rate than older men), but the experiments were not performed on older men either. At most the data suggest an emphasis on the prevention of disease in younger people.

Incidentally, all clinical breast-cancer research currently funded by the NCI is being conducted on women, even though 300 men a year die of this tumor. Do studies on the prevention of breast cancer which specifically exclude males signify a neglect of men's health? Or should a disease be studied in the group most at risk? Obviously, the coronary-disease research situation and the breast-cancer research situation are not equivalent, but together they do

serve to illustrate a point: diseases are most often studied in the highest-risk group, regardless of sex.

What about all the new drug tests that exclude women? Don't they prove the pharmaceutical industry's insensitivity to and disregard for females?

The Food and Drug Administration divides human testing of new medicines into three stages. Phase 1 studies are done on a small number of volunteers over a brief period of time, primarily to test safety. Phase 2 studies typically involve a few hundred patients and are designed to look more closely at safety and effectiveness. Phase 3 tests precede approval for commercial release and generally include several thousand patients.

In 1977 the FDA issued guidelines that specifically excluded women with "childbearing potential" from phase 1 and early phase 2 studies; they were to be included in late phase 2 and phase 3 trials in proportion to their expected use of the medication. FDA surveys conducted in 1983 and 1988 showed that the two sexes had been proportionally represented in clinical trials by the time drugs were approved for release.

The 1977 guidelines codified a policy already informally in effect since the thalidomide tragedy shocked the world in 1962. The births of armless or otherwise deformed babies in that era dramatically highlighted the special risks incurred when fertile women ingest drugs. So the policy of excluding such women from the early phases of drug testing arose out of concern, not out of disregard, for them. The policy was changed last year, as a consequence of political protest and recognition that early studies in both sexes might better direct testing.

THROUGHOUT human history from antiquity until the beginning of this century men, on the average, lived slightly longer than women. By 1920 women's life expectancy in the United States was one year greater than men's (54.6 years versus 53.6). After that the gap increased steadily, to 3.5 years in 1930, 4.4 years in 1940, 5.5 in 1950, 6.5 in 1960, and 7.7 in 1970. For the past quarter of a century the gap has remained relatively steady: around sev-

en years. In 1990 the figure was seven years (78.8 versus 71.8).

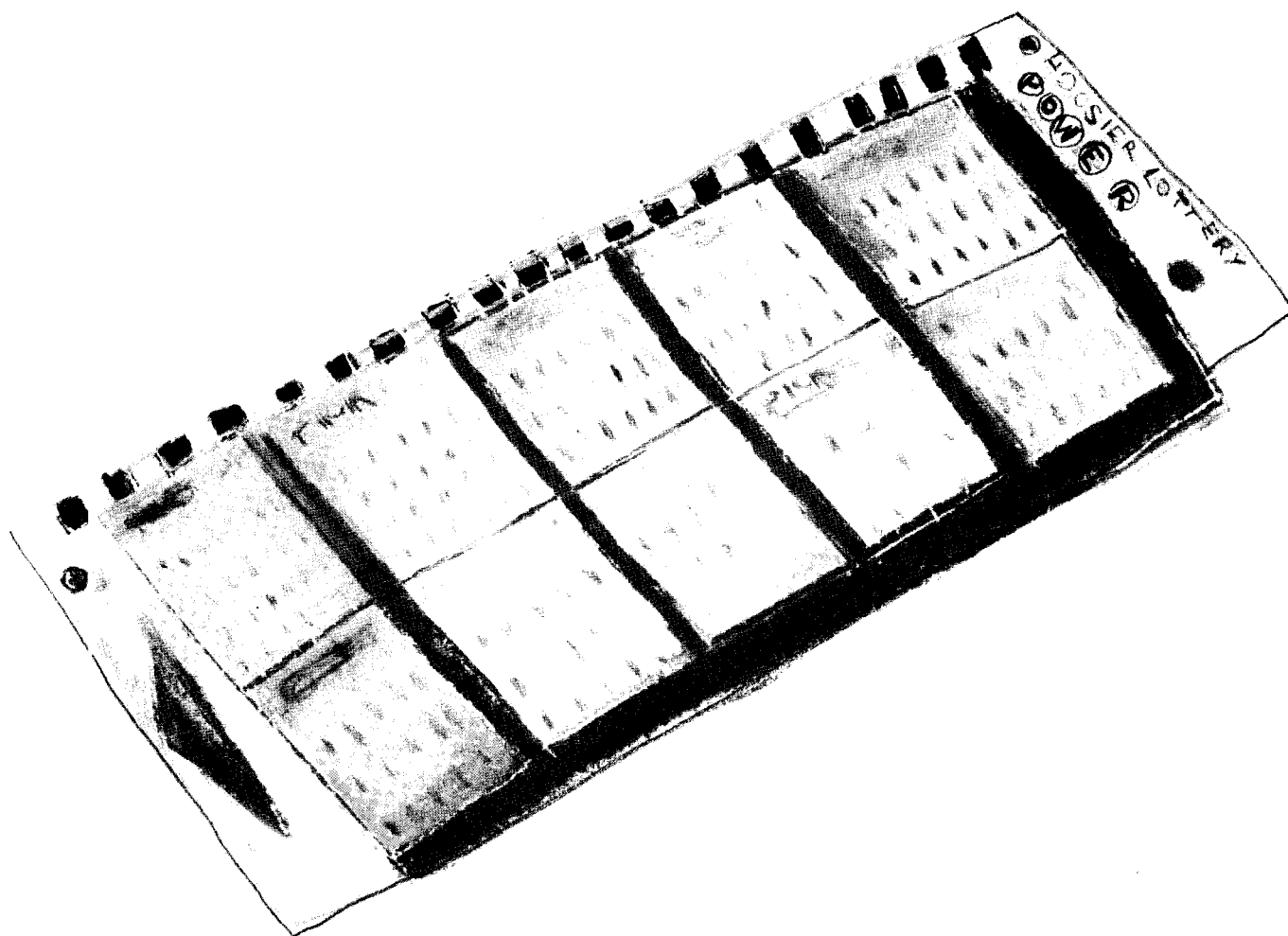
Thus in the latter part of the twentieth century women live about 10 percent longer than men. A significant part of the reason for this is medical care.

In past centuries complications during childbirth were a major cause of traumatic death in women. Medical advances have dramatically eliminated most of this risk. Infections such as smallpox, cholera, and tuberculosis killed large numbers of men and women at similar ages. The elimination of infection as the dominant cause of death has boosted the prominence of diseases that selectively afflict men earlier in life.

Age-adjusted mortality rates for men are higher for all twelve leading causes of death, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, lung disease (emphysema and pneumonia), liver disease (cirrhosis), suicide, and homicide. We have come to accept women's longer life span as natural, the consequence of their greater biological fitness. Yet this greater fitness never manifested itself in all the millennia of human history that preceded the present era and its medical-care system—the same system that women's-health advocates accuse of neglecting the female sex.

To remedy the alleged neglect, an Office of Research on Women's Health was established by the NIH in 1990. In 1991 the NIH launched its largest epidemiological project ever, the Women's Health Initiative. Costing more than \$600 million, this fifteen-year program will study the effects of estrogen therapy, diet, dietary supplements, and exercise on heart disease, breast cancer, colon cancer, osteoporosis, and other diseases in 160,000 postmenopausal women. The study is ambitious in scope and may well result in many advances in the care of older women.

What it will not do is close the "medical gender gap," the difference in the quality of care given the two sexes. The reason is that the gap does not favor men. As we have seen, women receive more medical care and benefit more from medical research. The net result is the most important gap of all: seven years, 10 percent of life. ☛



Rich

by ERIN MCGRAW

AT nine-fifteen Larry started closing out the register. He turned up the music to cover the embarrassing quiet, and the one guy who'd been drinking wine coolers all night started singing along, motioning Larry to join him. Larry grinned cheesily. During nights like this he remembered the stories he'd read as a kid about Houdini wrapped in chains, locked in a chest, dropped overboard. Ignoring the smile of his waitress, Dana Evans, and her breasts shoved up next to his arm, he re-counted the night's take. Kit would be sure to ask.

Kit was on the phone when he came home, her heels propped up next to the open window, and she was smoking, though she'd promised to stop. She smiled as he came in and

**He knew he was a cliché:
the groom with cold feet. But
everybody has doubts, he
told her. Didn't
she have any doubts?**

made a face at her cigarette, and then dragged the phone into the closet-sized extra room where they kept boxes they still hadn't unpacked. This meant she was talking to her parents, and the conversation could go on another hour.

He went for the pot of coffee she had left on the burner, listening for anything that might slide out from under the door.

He hadn't met her parents, although he and Kit had been married six months; Kit had hardly let him greet them over the phone. "Are they missing important limbs? Do they drool?" Larry's own parents had died years before, and he had a yearning now for the safe enclosure of family. "We could go visit them for a weekend." Kit twined herself

around him, starting at the knees. "I have another idea for the weekend," she whispered, and he lost track of his thinking.

But he returned to the subject when it occurred to him. "What does your old man do, anyway?" he asked one morning when she was getting ready for work.

"He's retired," she said, whacking cigarette ashes and pizza crumbs off the bedside table.

"What did he do? If it isn't a national secret."

"Trade," she said with a dimpled smile, so coy that he laughed and let it drop. He sometimes remembered the scene as he sat in his restaurant, waiting for a customer.

Now he was on his second cup of coffee, nursing a dull headache, and she sidled back into the kitchen. Her round face shone, traces of a smile still lingering around her mouth. "I didn't expect you home so soon," she said.

"Things keep up like this, you'll be seeing me on a full-time basis. Barely two hundred."

"It's a Tuesday. You can't expect a crowd on a Tuesday."

"After expenses, we cleared four bucks."

She sighed. "Give yourself a chance. Things will turn around. Everybody likes to eat out."

"You don't," he reminded her.

"I've seen what happens to food out there in the world," she said, bending to kiss him lightly on the hair. "You can't go under. You still have two years on your lease."

"A helpful reminder," he said grimly. "I don't know what else I can do. Have a drawing and force the winner to come and eat?"

"Word will get around. You'll have customers before you know it." She moved to the sink, where dishes were piled up, and jerked the hot water on hard.

Larry set his coffee cup down at the edge of the table. "Turn that off and sit here with me, all right? Cheer me up. Tell me"—he issued a tense smile as she turned off the water—"how your day went. What did your folks have to say?"

"Oh, family stuff," she said, perching on a chair. "Listen, Lyle had a new joke today: Man stands looking out the window at a dog licking its privates. Man says to his friend, 'My God, that looks wonderful. I wish I could do that.' Friend looks at him and shrugs. 'Well, it's your dog.'"

"Kit, that's a million years old," he said, while she hugged herself and half collapsed in laughter.

"It's a great joke," she gasped, pounding the table so hard that she knocked his cup of steaming coffee to the floor. It splashed his leg from knee to ankle, and he howled, and she screamed.

"Larry, I'm sorry. Quick, take your pants off. That hurts to look at," she said, going for paper towels. Larry rocked back and forth and sucked his teeth, feeling fat weals already bubbling on his ankle.

"Get me some ice," he moaned, and Kit shook her head, rummaging in the cupboard for the yellow baking-soda box.

"This is better. Takes out the sting and doesn't leave a scar."

"Christ, Kit, I didn't ask your opinion." He scooted across the floor and reached into the freezer himself, his leg shimmering with pain.

"I'm sorry," she said, still clutching the box.

"I just wish you'd be careful. You aren't careful," he said, trying to hold the ice cubes in place with both hands.

"I'm sorry," she said, and he knew he was making her miserable, but he couldn't stop.

"I needed a little help tonight, can you understand that? A little comfort."

"What can I do?" she whispered.

He paused, considering. Buy out the restaurant? Let him have a week in Tahiti with Dana? "Introduce me to your parents," he said, and watched, amazed, as she shuddered against the counter. "Come on, girl. It won't be as bad as all that."

"You can't imagine," she said.

BY midnight, when Kit went to bed, chains of furious white blisters had fanned up Larry's shin. He found some relief soaking his leg in a tub of ice water, but ten minutes after he took it out, his leg was stinging again, the tight blisters on the bone already starting to blaze.

He installed himself in front of the TV with bags of ice draped gingerly over his leg and a water glass, scotch, and aspirin on the table beside him. Although he wished he could stop, he still blamed Kit. She had a perversity of timing that was brilliant—waltzing into the restaurant the one night Dana wore a blouse that was practically sheer, or waiting until he was melancholy with drink before calling him lightly to the bedroom. They never seemed to be running at the same speed, and he wondered if all new couples spent so much time apologizing—for her huge practical jokes, for his long glooms. The apologies went back and forth like Ping-Pong balls until Larry was finally reduced to apologizing again for having believed, in a lunatic moment that never wholly left them, that he wanted to leave her.

"It's over. It's done. We're moving ahead." She would stroke his damp hair while he kicked off the sheet, unconsoled, crying a little.

"How can you expect me to believe that?" he'd ask.

"I've never lied to you." But something made him watchful—something in her crossed arms, the tilt of her neck. Meanwhile, he apologized again, promising to believe her. He owed her that much. He owed her more than that. His marriage, not even a year old, felt like a solid page of debt.

Shifting now on the chair, trying to balance the bags of ice, he reflected that he would have been slower to propose if he'd known marriage would involve so many balance sheets. Larry and Kit had tumbled into love as if into a well, darting across the width of Elite, Indiana, where she'd come to manage the RiteBuy, licking each other's fingers on lunch breaks, stealing into each other's cars. One night

when Larry had to stay late, closing accounts at the restaurant, Kit crawled into his office and began by unlacing his shoes. Larry, startled, cried out, but she shushed him with a sound like a growl and he didn't make another noise until she had taken away all his clothes and straddled him in his chair.

A month later they were talking marriage, and Kit called her parents, who were birding in North Carolina. Larry was dazzled, hardly able to walk a straight line. When his best friend, Rocks, punched him in the shoulder and chuckled about the ball and chain, Larry grinned. "She makes me do hard time. Hard time."

He and Kit were on their way to their engagement party before they had their first fight, a squabble about Larry's driving. Kit claimed he always hit the turns too hard, and Larry, stung, punched the accelerator to illustrate how he never lost control of the vehicle for an instant. Kit glared and gripped the seat, and then remembered to tell him that Rocks had called earlier. "He bought your lottery ticket. He told me to tell you he feels lucky."

"Me too," Larry said, leering, scooting around another corner and trying to rest his hand on her knee until she shoved him away.

"Not lucky enough," she said. "Why don't you just flush that money down the toilet? Or give it to me. I could bring home groceries."

"Two bucks, twice a week. What are you going to bring home on that?"

"More than you have," she shot back, and wouldn't talk for the rest of the drive.

At the party was a huge cake from Kit's store that had KIT + LARRY ringed in white icing. Larry stood nodding while Kit thanked her employees by name, and he felt a sense of oppression gathering in his throat as the well-wishers shook his hand. He smiled, said his thanks, and knew he was a cliché: the groom with cold feet. Chattering with her friends, Kit looked unfamiliar and not pleasant, and Larry reminded himself that everyone felt this detachment, which didn't seem far from horror. The question, he thought, was not whether he and Kit were right together. The question was how anyone made it to the altar at all. When Rocks called him to watch the lottery broadcast, Larry bolted as if he'd snapped his leash.

The lottery blonde had already pulled out the first number, which matched theirs, but anyone who played the lottery knew that the first two matches didn't mean anything. Larry ticked his eyes over the lottery blonde. "When do we get to

win her?" he asked, the joke he always made. He was reassured when her second number matched the ticket Rocks was holding; it seemed a good omen. Not until she pulled the third matching number in a row did he sit up, alert, his breath uneven. The odds were crazily against three in a row. He glanced at Rocks, who was staring at the screen, a stern, fixed look on his face, even when Larry nudged him and reminded him that they'd never gotten so far before.

The lottery blonde seemed to be moving quickly and slowly at once. She pulled up the fourth number—48, to match their 48. "Rocks, what's the pot tonight?" He knew, of course; everybody knew. His voice wobbled like a teenager's.

"Twenty-six mill."

"Think you could find a way to spend your half?"

"Naw. I'll give it to charity." Neither of them laughed.

Larry reminded himself that she wouldn't pick their last number—26; the odds were impossibly long. But he couldn't help himself anymore, and dropped to his hands and knees in front of the TV, softly babbling and pleading as if some human transaction were going on. He trembled, and tears stood in his eyes; when he looked up after rubbing them, he saw the blonde gently setting a card reading "26" next to the other cards. Larry felt oxygen rush out of his body. Then air and gravity came roaring back and he sprang off the couch, bellowing. "Rich! Rich! I!" He was leaping across the room, banging into his giggling friends and then

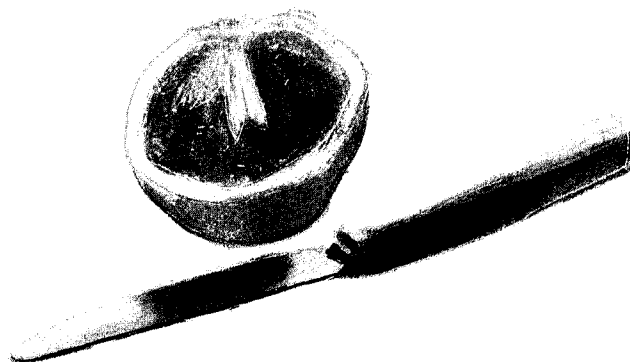
leaping away again, unable to stop crying out disconnected words—"Never! Now!"

He lost track of everyone else—Rocks, Kit. Thirteen million dollars! Doors he'd never even glimpsed were wide open, calling his name; he imagined a boundaryless, glittering ocean. He banged into the table that held the engagement cake, sloshing orange punch over the icing. "Look out, now," someone said, but Larry laughed, took

a cup of punch, and splashed himself in the face. A hand pulled at his elbow. "Larry," Kit said. "For Pete's sake, get a grip. Don't do this."

"All systems go!" he said, wheeling to look at her. She looked ungainly, mean, her body full of juts and angles. She criticized his driving. Words flew out of his mouth like rockets. "The wedding's off," he said.

Rocks told him later that people stopped talking then, but Larry didn't remember. He recalled fingering off a corner of the cake, and then jumping on the coffee table to do the bump with Dana Evans. Sounds kept pushing up from his throat; he was roaring. When did Kit leave? Her purse was



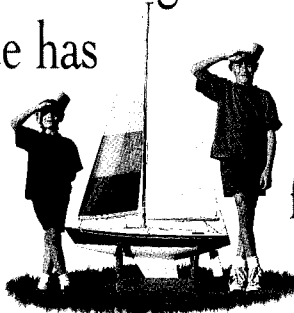


*Bruce Bober
bought his SW2
at Saturn of
Farmington Hill*

When it's time to ship out with the fleet, Bruce Bober enlists the help of his Saturn wagon.

When you were a kid, were you *sure* about what you wanted to be when you grew up? Well, Bruce wasn't either, but he got a big hint at age eleven when he discovered a love for building *things that move*. And he's been immersed in model-making ever since. (See photo.)

Not surprisingly, Bruce has managed to use his talents as a tinkerer in his career. He happens to be a Saturn engineer, and his skills at figuring things out come in pretty handy in our Body Development Group.



When they're not on duty, Lisa and Brian get plenty of use out of Dad's wagon themselves. (Baseball gear, archery, bicycles, and visiting their civilian friends.)

Like a lot of Saturn team members, Bruce decided to buy a Saturn of his own. (His wife Diane lobbied for a Saturn coupe.) But since the family's got such a hobbyist lifestyle (and because his fleet had graduated from bathtub size to pond size), Bruce decided what they really needed was the Saturn wagon, and its better boat-hauling abilities. (After using it for chauffeur duty, Diane finds the wagon more than adequate in the fun-to-drive category. In fact, she says the kids only like to ride in Dad's car now.)



Even so, as much as he likes his Saturn wagon, we can't say that Bruce is completely satisfied. You see, we still don't offer the Saturn model he *really* wants. Which is, of course, a Saturn that floats. (See photo again.)



The Saturn SW2

A Different Kind of Company. A Different Kind of Car.

Bruce Bober is pictured with a 1993 Saturn SW2. Manufacturer's suggested retail price for the 1994 Saturn SW2 is \$12,595, including retailer prep. Tax, license, transportation, and options are extra. If you'd like to know more about Saturn, and our new sedans, coupes, and wagons, please call us any time at 1-800-522-5000. © 1993 Saturn Corporation.

already gone when Rocks got Larry to sit down and watch the tape of the lottery drawing so that Larry could see that Rocks had recorded it the night before and then gone out to buy a ticket with the matching numbers. "It was a *joke*, you moron," Rocks said, his hand clamped around Larry's arm. "Nobody won that night. You weren't supposed to—Christ."

"Don't do this, Rocks."

Rocks pinched Larry on the wrist, twisting the skin hard. "What are you going to do? What are you going to say to Kit?"

"Kit?" Larry never told Kit about this part, but his dread was that somehow she knew anyway. "Kit?" As if her name were a foreign word. "Kit's gone."

"Don't you want her to come back?"

"No," he said.

HE did, of course, as soon as he regained his senses. He needed a year and a half to wheedle her back, while fortunes at the restaurant started to dwindle and he dipped into savings for new menu covers. Kit refused to speak to him on the phone for two months, and he woke up mornings imagining that he heard the pop of sniper fire. "I was crazy," he pleaded when she finally talked to him. "I didn't know what I was saying. All kinds of stuff was coming out of my mouth."

"You were clear enough to me," Kit sniffed.

"Babe," he crooned, "everybody has doubts. The best couples in the world have doubts. Didn't you have any doubts?"

"Not then."

"It was something I had to say. I'm ready now."

"I already told my parents we decided this was wrong. What do I tell them now? That we redecided and it's right?"

"Yes," Larry said. "Tell them that."

She hung up on him, but when he counted to ten and called back, she picked up the telephone, which was progress.

In the end they sped through a snowy February night to Oakville, forty miles away, to a justice of the peace whose radio played bluegrass while Kit cried and laughed and promised to take Larry for her husband. Larry moved to kiss her for the first time in a year and a half, rediscovering the moistness of her lips as he tried to part them with his tongue. She bit him, and then laughed. "Come on, husband. Let's get on with things."

"She's a spitfire," the justice said, as Larry gave him fifty bucks.

"You don't know the half of it," Larry said thickly. Kit wouldn't let him lay a hand on her on the drive home, but

that night they clawed and yelled until neighbors on both sides were banging on the walls.

"Happy, darling?" Kit croaked, when he brought her coffee in the morning.

"Close enough," he whispered.

Happy. They lobbed the word back and forth in the months that followed. Larry eavesdropped on Kit's assurances to her parents. He walked around his apartment, blinking at Kit's pictures on the wall next to his own. Happiness seemed to be a state of perpetual surprise; he was still jolted to find Kit's car in the driveway. He took to giving himself quiet pep talks—only natural to be having

a little trouble, having never known true happiness before. Watching her bustle in the door with groceries, he reminded himself that this was joy he had fought hard to win.

"Three more bags are in the car," she said.



KIT'S parents wanted to be called DeAnne and Roger, an intimacy that stuck on Larry's tongue. Kit hadn't prepared him for the three-story house or the Mercedes in the driveway, and Larry, unnerved by his new in-laws' padded, wealthy cheeks, could hardly meet their eyes. They made birdcalls to each other through the bathroom door and then chuckled fondly. They laid out an amazing breakfast too; Roger had to put a leaf in the table when DeAnne backed out of

the kitchen with raisin snails. "Kit told us breakfast is your best meal," she said, picking up one of the three forks in front of her.

Larry blinked. This wasn't true at all. Kit scolded him regularly over his refusal to eat before noon. "That Kit just can't keep a secret. What else did she tell you?"

"Never let you get behind the wheel," Kit said, leaning over to goose him and brushing her leg against his burned shin.

"Not one accident. Never even a ticket," he protested, wincing, but Roger was already on his way back into the kitchen, asking Larry if he was an orange-juice man.

"I wish you wouldn't drag out old arguments in front of your parents," Larry murmured to Kit.

"Just teasing, Parnelli."

"Do they know that?" He was off balance in the face of her rowdy high spirits, and he wanted to know where her dread had gone. She was revved, spinning, wound up like a toy, and all her prior unease seemed to have drained into him.

Why America Needs an Immigration Moratorium

From amidst the cacophony of discordant immigration proposals, one hears the emergence of some simple truths. First we now know that immigration is costing somebody, or some people, a lot of money. Whether it's hundreds of millions or billions (the studies never seem to agree), it's clear that immigration is not a self-financing proposition. State taxpayers in California, Florida, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia and Texas are demanding action.

Second, it's clear that immigration is now a political issue of some potency. Polls indicated that most Americans generally oppose immigration, if for no other reason than they think immigration is needless. Some is OK, they say, but only as long as there are no noticeable ill effects.

But all that changed in the face of Haitian boats, the World Trade Center bombing, Chinese boats, international immigrant-smuggling and crime syndicates, persistent illegal immigration from Mexico, and high profile tales of immigrant-related welfare rip-offs.

Now a public consensus has emerged: Let's hold off on more immigration. If immigration is costing money and creating other problems, why not just give the country a break from immigration for a while?

So far, the political leadership in this country has failed to grasp this whole analysis. Most Democrats and Republicans have suggested either beefing up the Border Patrol or cutting benefits for illegal immigrants. Within these two broad strategies is an array of often inconsistent ideas to "defuse immigrant bashing," as it's often called.

The administration's "border enhancement plan," for example, includes measures to accelerate naturalization ceremonies. This noble-sounding initiative to create more citizens will actually produce longer backlogs for waiting relatives (now at 4 million) and only increase future pressures for illegal immigration.

Eventually political leaders will have to face facts: Immigration is costing money. Rather than cut off welfare to immigrants, or rubber-stamp more applications, Congress and the president need to think about cutting the number of immigrants. That's really what the public wants. And it is probably only a matter of time before most politicians figure this out.

Unfortunately, the current laws take us in exactly the wrong direction, actually causing immigration levels to increase.

Based on current projections of temporary and permanent immigration, new labor market entrants are likely to exceed available jobs by more than 8 million in the next 10 years. This cannot be allowed to happen. We need a pause in immigration for a while.

Don't get me wrong. To reduce immigration, or provide a moratorium or time-out, is not to suggest that many immigrants do not become hard working, model citizens. It simply means that the country needs a break to absorb and handle its critical social and internal problems, and clean up its affairs to face the 21st century. It needs to strengthen its national institutions, civilization and culture to withstand the future stresses and strains likely to emerge later this decade.

We've had such immigration breaks in the past. In the early 19th century, and for a good part of the 20th, we've enjoyed sustained periods of very low immigration. And the truth is, sustained pauses have been good for the country and especially good for recent immigrants.

A few in Congress have figured this out. Despite feeling that it would be wonderful to take anyone who wants to come here, they are facing the sad truth that we need to limit immigration significantly to preserve the nation.

But, for the most part, the discordant noise of a bewildered and perplexed national leadership is still drowning out the tough truths needed for a brighter future. While the immigration issue is now firmly on the national radar screen, we may be years away from serious reform. How long can we wait?

by Dan Stein, Executive Director

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DeAnne settled across the table, her smile already in place. "So, you're a restaurateur. You must eat out every night."

Larry glanced at Kit, who wore a stark grin and nodded to urge him along. "Yes, ma'am," he said, feeling his way. "Your girl likes a varied menu."

"You try to please her," DeAnne said. "That's good. A marriage can survive anything if the partners work to please each other."

"She keeps me working," Larry said, trying for a joke.

"Is there any more bacon?" Kit asked, getting up just as Roger came through the swinging doors, a sizzling plate in each hand.

"I cooked the whole pound," he said to Larry. "I thought just this once you'd like to get enough."

"What a treat," Larry said, even more careful now, and angry with Kit. What was she telling them? After a single piece of toast he felt uncomfortable, ready to leave the table, but DeAnne was pouring more coffee while Roger distributed the bacon, piling half of it on Larry's plate. Larry watched the strips cool, both annoyed and relieved that no one seemed to notice he wasn't eating.

DeAnne was talking to Kit about their vacation to North Carolina, bringing her up-to-date on friends and old neighbors. "Fred Pindell's home again; he can't hold a job with two hands. His father's got a management position open, but he's afraid to tell Fred about it. He says it would be easier just to close the factory now and save Fred the trouble."

DeAnne cut her eyes to Larry. "Fred is Roger's nephew," she explained, and he nodded, keeping a pleasant expression. "The family's been making furniture for generations. They're worth quite a lot—although not as much as some, of course," DeAnne went on, twinkling.

"Fred Pindell," Kit exhaled. "Good Lord. He taught me how to play fruit roulette." She reached into the basket at the end of the table, pulled out an orange, and cut it down the middle, setting both halves cut sides down. "Now everybody mark the outside where you think a seed is. If you come up right, you get a kiss."

"There's a gamble worth taking," Roger said loudly, crosshatching the rind and passing it to DeAnne, who made a mark opposite his with her pink fingernail. Larry studied the orange when DeAnne slid it to him, probing to feel the rind's thickness, the amount of membrane inside.

"A sporting man," Roger said. "Checking out the odds."

Larry looked up, feeling his color rise. "Go on, now," DeAnne said. "We all know you're going to win." Careless in his embarrassment, Larry jammed the sharp fruit knife into the orange, slicing right down the side so the blade came out with a seed quivering on the end of it.

"What did I tell you?" Roger said, as Kit leaned over to peck Larry on the cheek. "The man knows how to play."

"He's a winner, all right," Kit said. "That's why I married him."

BY early afternoon Larry was shaking with the strain. He and Roger had retreated to the porch after the uneasy breakfast; Roger picked up the newspaper and read the NASDAQ index aloud for fifteen minutes. Finally he looked over his glasses at Larry. "Where do you have investments, son?"

"There's a checking account at First Bank of Elite." Roger chuckled, and pointedly waited until Larry went on. "Right now everything goes into the restaurant. But I'm sure I'll be investing one of these days."

"You can be too cautious, you know," Roger said, and then ducked his head and went back to the paper. Kit trailed her mother from room to room, chattering ninety to nothing, and the one moment Larry was able to catch her in the guest bedroom, she told him that she and her mother were going shopping—DeAnne was already backing out the car. "There's nothing that can't wait, Bacon Breath."

"That's one of the things I want to talk about."

"A joke, dear. What's wrong with you? They must be wondering where my other husband is. The big joker I told them about."

"I'm wondering where my real wife is. The one who refuses to eat at a restaurant." He was talking to himself; Kit had trotted out of the room, and just before he heard the car door slam outside his window, DeAnne whooped with laughter. Then the house was unnervingly silent, waiting for Larry to make one wrong move. He picked up a red-glass paperweight, aware that it was probably worth more than he would think.

Outside the bedroom door Roger cleared his throat, and Larry jumped. "Son? I'm working on a project out here. I could use some help."

"Sure," Larry said, hearing how surprise constricted his voice as he swung open the door and saw his father-in-law holding a hammer. "Happy to."

The project was down in the basement: a porch swing, a surprise for DeAnne. "I work on it when I can, but she never goes anywhere for long. I tell her I could have been President, but she keeps needing me to unload groceries. Well, you know how it is."

"You've made real progress," Larry said—a lie. Stacks of rough cedar boards lay next to the wall, and Roger looked at them with mistrust. Larry himself had only the vaguest ideas of how anything got built, and he looked around for saws and planers. "Are you following a plan?"

Roger flapped his hand. "For a porch swing? Here, help me pull up those big two-bys." Larry tried to keep his movements synchronized with the other man's, but it wasn't easy; whether he wanted to hoist the wood higher or change direction, Roger only grunted, and Larry started to sweat, his hands marking the wood. "Don't spend much time in the shop, do you?" Roger finally asked.

"There's not much space for woodworking in an apartment."

"I gather you won't be there much longer."

Larry frowned. "It's a nice apartment." The ballooning, airless feeling from breakfast was back, and he resisted the urge to rise on tiptoe.

Roger frowned back and let his end of the plank rest on the floor. "Have you changed your plans? I appreciate your impulse to save, but a house is a basic investment. I hate to think of Kit and you cooped up."

"We're fine," Larry said. "We're strong. We can see through the tough times." He was aware of how apologetic he sounded—the force of habit.

"Good Lord, boy, what do you want?" Roger put his hands on his hips. "I don't mean to tell you how to spend your money, but there's such a thing as too much caution."

"Could you tell me just exactly what Kit has told you?" Larry said, straightening.

"No need to look so alarmed. She told us you two've been banking the lottery money, trying to think about the wisest way to spend it. I don't mind telling you that DeAnne and I were relieved that you were both being so sensible. Money like that—we've seen it change people. Kit has too. The truth is, at first I think she was afraid."

"She was right about that," Larry said, hanging on to the wall now for balance, his burned leg ping.

"Money's a good thing. You'll see. It's normal to be afraid at first, but you'll look back at all this and laugh. Have a family! Go around the world! There's nothing to stop you."

"I don't know how to start," Larry said.

"Buy a house. Make Kit a swing. You'll see—it will take care of itself."

Roger squeezed Larry's shoulder and stepped back

awkwardly. "I always thought I'd be the one to take care of Kit. I thought that was my job. But here you—I guess I can move aside."

"She relies on you," Larry said. "More than you know."

Roger smiled self-consciously and retrieved a thin, bright saw from behind the boards. He directed Larry to the cut lines he'd already penciled in and said, "I'll hold her steady. You've got the brawn."

Larry hadn't held a saw in his hands since high school woods'op, but he took the tool and started into the wood, pleased with the smooth lines he made and the dry, sweet cedar smell that rose up to his face. It was an unexpected pleasure. Just as he smiled, the saw coughed and snagged, ripping out a half-inch chunk of wood before slicing deeply into Larry's thumb.

DEANNE and Kit, exhaling cigarette breath, didn't return home until early evening, when the men were already back from the emergency room. Larry was lying down with the shades pulled, woozy from pain-killer and the scotch Roger poured when they got home. Roger couldn't do enough for him, even though he had to know the fault was Larry's own, and Larry was thinking—what the hell—about having him bring the bottle to the bedside.

He had sawed right into the pad of his thumb: eight stitches. Now it was wrapped in so much gauze it seemed as big as a light bulb, and in Larry's unfocused vision it seemed to give off light. He looked forward to Kit's reaction. While he and Roger had been waiting in the emergency room, Larry had worked on a speech for her, starting with the bacon business and ending with the money. *Any other whoppers I should know about?* was part of it, or maybe *Just how sorry do you think I am?* He should have written it down. Roger would be happy to bring him some paper.

When Kit did come in, he said, "Hi."

"Egads. A damaged husband. What happened?"

"A saw. Your father's making a porch swing, but he doesn't want your mother to know."

Kit smiled. "He's been working on that swing since I was a Girl Scout. The only one who thinks it's a surprise is Dad."

"You might try telling him."

"You must be joking. We've spent years not knowing about Dad's swing."

"He could move on to other projects—bone up on the stock market," Larry said, holding up his thumb to feel it pulse. "He's all set to manage our portfolio."

Kit folded her arms and leaned back so that her shoulders were supported by the wall, her face in shadow. "We could use the help," she murmured.

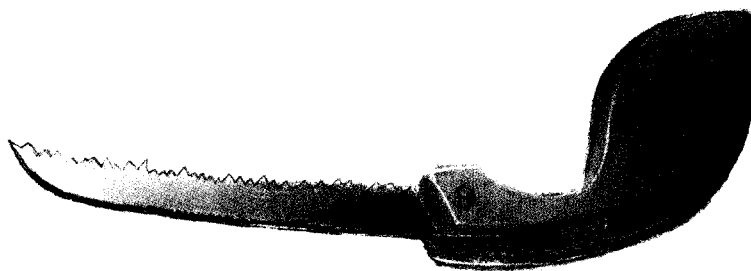
"You want to invite him in and go over the accounts? How long were you planning to tell them we were keeping thirteen million dollars in savings?"

After a pause he heard a sniffling hiccup. "You want me to tell them the truth? Should I start with our engagement party?"

"They expect tours and world cruises. They think you should be wearing a goddamned crown."

"They don't think I should still be wearing a nametag at the RiteBuy."

Larry made his voice high and pleasant. "A good wife helps her husband through the hard times. A good wife pitches in."



"A good wife consoles her husband every night when he comes home," she said, matching him high for high, pleasant for pleasant, coming out of the shadow to sit beside him on the bed. With a soft motion, light as a wing, she stroked his thumb. "But then, a good husband provides."

"Don't have much patience, do you? Or maybe it's trust you don't have."

"Nobody could have more trust than me," she said. "Every day I believe in you all over again. I'm not the one who comes home crying."

"No—you're the one who tells your parents I eat breakfast and win the lottery."

"You could," she said. "I tell them where we're going. It's more trust than you've ever shown." Her hand bore down on him, harder now, so his thumb throbbed and Larry thought it might explode right through its bandages.

"If you think we're going to have millions, you haven't been paying attention," he said. For the first time he wondered why they never talked about goals. They wanted to be happy; it was hard to get beyond that.

"I told my mother today, in the car: You're a man who gets what he wants. You don't ever stop trying. No one can know that better than me."

"What if I don't want to keep trying?" he whispered.

"Christ, Larry, this is no time to gamble." Not gently she squeezed his thumb, and in the burst of white pain he felt one of the stitches give. "What have we been building?"

"Nothing," Larry said. He sat up woozily, swung his legs over the bed, and pulled his thumb away before she could squeeze it again and make him cry out. "I'm going downstairs. I'm going to have Roger take DeAnne to the basement so she can be measured for her swing."

"Meaning?"

"If Roger clears things up with her early, he can avoid nasty disappointments later."

"Is that what you're doing? Clearing up?"

Larry shook his head. The longing to hold her ripped through him like a gale; he looked at the floor and tried to steady himself. "Not me. I'm clearing out."

ON their way home, after fifty silent miles, Larry stopped to pick up a hitchhiker, something he and Kit had never done. Kit's face was pinched shut, and she didn't move when Larry got out to help the man, who stumbled with his duffel bag. Once they were rolling again, the man said his name was Lloyd and he was coming home from a party.

Larry introduced himself. Kit kept her head turned. "Must have been quite a party," Larry said, "if it was worth hitchhiking to."

"It didn't start so far away," Lloyd said, squinting out his window as if to glimpse whatever Kit was staring down. "It just—moved on me."

Larry grinned tightly. "I've been to that party."

"Not this one, you weren't."

Over Kit's snort Larry said, "I like parties. You never know what will happen."

Lloyd leaned forward and tapped the back of Larry's seat. "At this party a fellow took apart a refrigerator in ten minutes. Nobody thought he could do it. He won two hundred bucks off us."

"That's a good one," Larry said.

Lloyd tapped the seat again. "Two donkeys got thrown in the water. Did you know they can swim? When they got to the shore, they kept clubbing their own ears with their hooves to get the water out."

"That's rich," Larry said.

"I've been to lots of parties," Kit broke in. "I went to one where the guys and girls swapped underwear. I went to one in January where we set off fireworks in the snow. Neighbors called the police to report UFOs."

"Haw," Lloyd said. "I'll remember that."

She said, "I've been to parties with Miss Elerette County. She brought her crown with her, and a ham."

"How about you?" Lloyd said, tapping Larry's seat.

"I went to one," he began, trying to think ahead, invent, "where somebody wanted to go sailing, but there wasn't any lake around. Behind the house was this little valley, so we ran a hose out there and tried to block off the ends of the yard with bags of cement." Silence eddied up around him; he was boring even himself. "I saw a guy win the lottery."

"How much did he win?" Lloyd asked. "I won twenty-five bucks one time."

"Thirteen million," Larry and Kit said together, as if with one voice. She continued, suddenly assured, "I've heard this story before."

"He bought a house," Larry said.

"And a Mercedes," Kit said. "Two."

"Nice cars," Lloyd nodded.

"People have been waiting for him to leave," Kit said. "To take his two Mercedes and go away."

"I would," Lloyd said.

"Me too," Larry said. "But he just sits around and doesn't go. What do you make of a man like that?"

"He don't deserve all that money. Some people just don't deserve their luck."

Kit said to Larry, "Was this the party where you guys ran the chicken up the flagpole?"

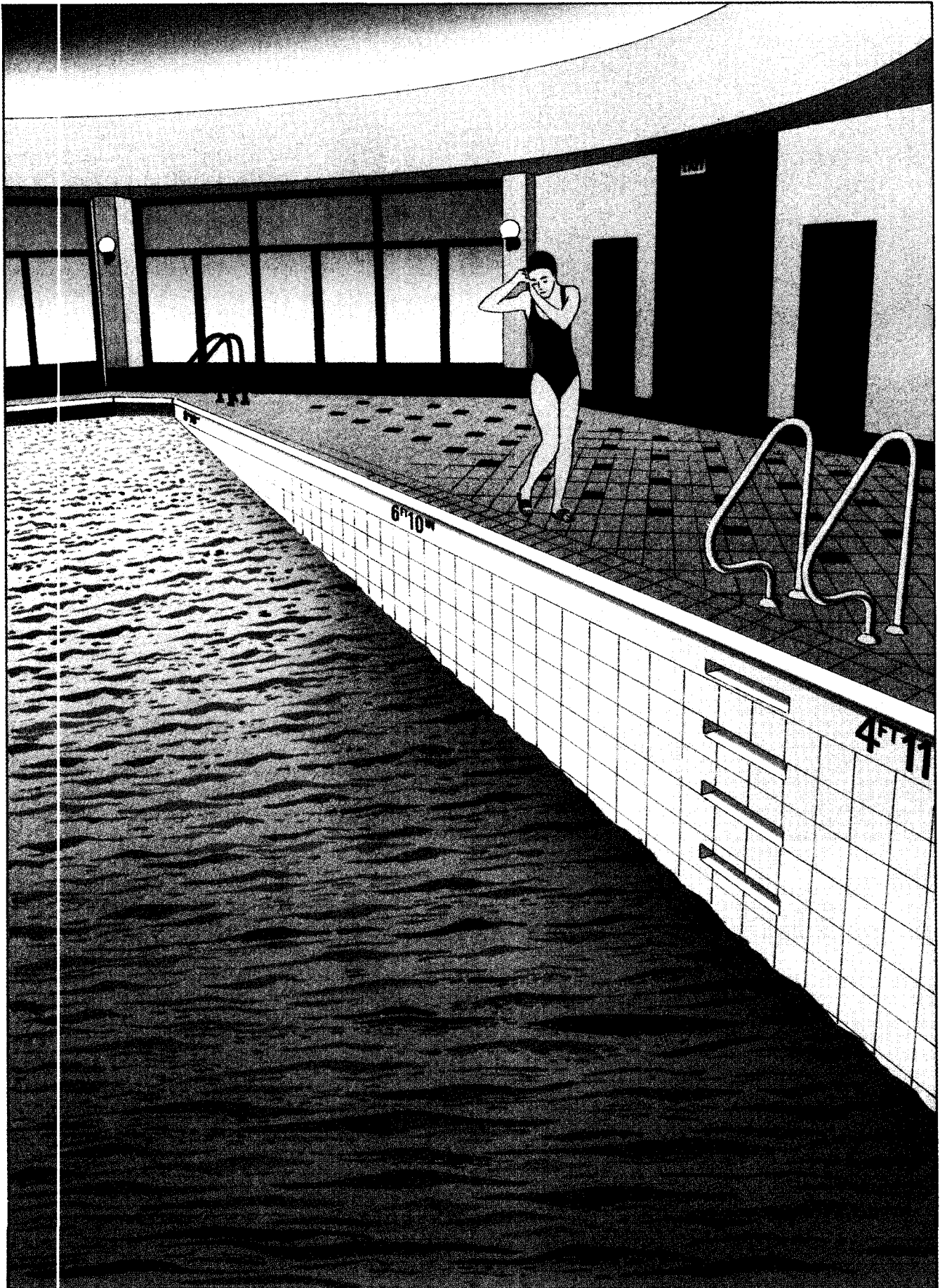
Lloyd guffawed.

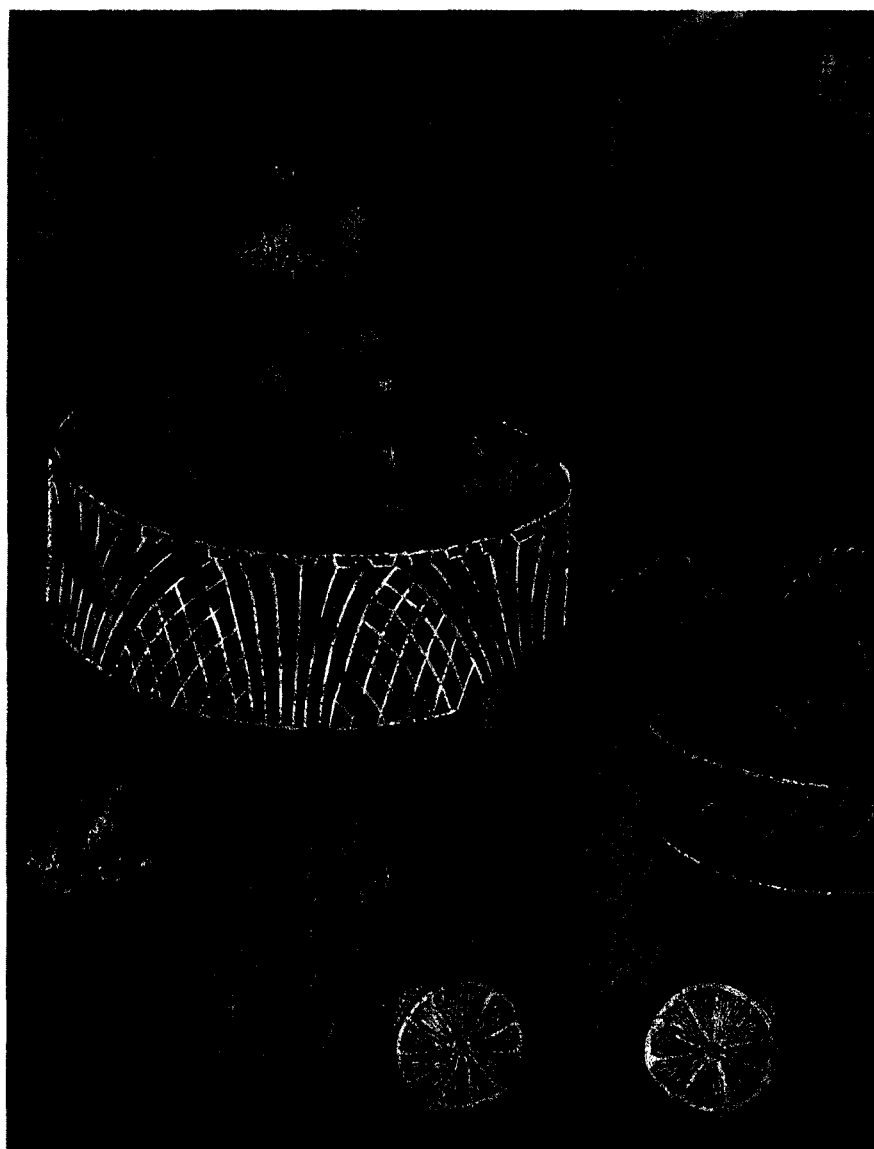
"No," Larry said, looking at her happy, confiding face in surprise. "You can tell about that one next. This was before."

Lloyd said, "You two are just right for each other. I can see why you're married."

"Us?" Kit said. "We're not married."

"We haven't even met," Larry agreed. ☞





The Virtuous Oil

*A two-tier strategy for employing
nature's finest fat*

OLIVE oil is the only fat I cook with, and not because recent nutritional studies point to it as being the fat least damaging to the cardiovascular system. Rather, I use it because I much prefer its flavor, which often bears notes of citrus, hazelnuts, almonds, fresh-cut grass, artichokes, and herbs like rose-

by Corby Kummer

mary and sage. Dominating them all is the miraculously sweetened, intensified taste of the olive itself. I find no other fat so easy to digest or, paradoxically, so ungreasy. When I happen upon oils of earthy power combined with a sweet, fruity sharpness, I understand perfectly why Italian and Greek friends drink

several spoonfuls every morning, convinced that olive oil is better than any medicine or vitamin pill. I'm especially free with olive oil during salad season, when the eternal search for the perfect dressing is at its most intense. (I'll write next month about balsamic vinegar, nowadays olive oil's seemingly constant companion.)

In the past two years my travels in a number of olive-oil-producing countries have shown me why good olive oil costs so much. Expensive as it is, producers of the best olive oil can seldom charge a price that will actually pay for the labor. Oil making at the highest level is usually a glorified hobby or a sideline, often for gentleman farmers and winemakers looking to reward their best customers with a "small homage." In his new book, *Treasures of the Italian Table*, Burton Anderson, the author of essential wine guides, good-naturedly describes the endless hoeing and manure-spreading he and his family performed for the benefit of the olive trees they cultivated on their Tuscan plot, and, finally, the rushed handpicking of the fruit lest it overripen. Anderson came to know firsthand why in Italy olive oil used to cost by weight up to five times as much as the choicest meat.

In my travels I learned, too, that a high price, a lovely label, and a beautifully designed bottle by no means guarantee an exceptional oil. And no oil improves with age.

TO help sort out the differences between oils, I turned to Maurizio Castelli, an agricultural consultant now in demand all over Italy (and in northern California) by people who want to rival the finest Tuscan oil producers, many of whom are Castelli clients. Burton Anderson, who had needed advice on olive varieties, fertilization, and when to pick and press, had also turned to Castelli, a burly man with a bushy gray moustache who is always in motion. In his laboratory on the ground floor of an old stone farm building in the middle of Chianti Classico country, Castelli recently arrayed for me samples of oils from all of Italy's producing regions. I didn't see as many bottles as I expected to. Oil tasting is different from wine tasting, Castelli explained, be-

cause bitter tastes accumulate and there's no really good way to clear the palate between tastes. (He employs a strong, unsweetened mixture of fresh lemon juice and water; others say that lemon is too harsh, and that only rinsing the mouth and chewing apple slices will serve.)

The oils ranged in color from lemon yellow to a buttery gold to the new-leaf green I had always thought was a sign of the strongest taste and first freshness. Not so, Castelli said. Green does frequently signify that the olives were picked early, and thus will give their strongest flavor; and a lighter color does often indicate oxidation resulting from sunlight, which reduces the oil's vitamin E content and destroys delicate aromatic overtones. The general rule holds that the yellower the color, the later the olives were picked, the sweeter the oil, and the faster it will go rancid. But olives picked early—a hallmark of oil from the Tuscan Chianti zone, which scrapes the back of your throat—don't always produce a noticeably green oil. Moreover, the green could be chlorophyll not just from the olives but from leaves, which in excess will also impart a bitter aftertaste.

A better sign of full flavor is a cloudy oil. Unfiltered wine and oil are both in fashion these days among the food-aware, even if consumers instinctively trust a clear liquid. Tiny suspended olive particles in a freshly pressed oil mean that it is at its very richest. In the famous Seven Countries study, conducted in the 1960s by the pathbreaking diet researcher Ancel Keys, which found the incidence of heart disease to be much lower in people whose principal dietary fat was olive oil, the long-lived Cretans probably consumed such rustic oil. (Eventually the particles will form a sediment; if you notice one, simply decant the oil into another bottle or a cruet, preferably opaque.)

Greeks are still insatiable consumers. Every single nonbread, nonsweet recipe in the gorgeous, authoritative *The Foods of Greece*, by Aglaia Kremezi, a journalist and scholar who lives in Athens, calls for olive oil. Most are simple, as is the single best way to eat olive oil: poured over warm bread, grilled if possible. With or without fresh tomato puree and a rubbing of a split garlic clove, this is the elemental food of the Mediterranean. (The second best way is mashed with the insides of a hot baked potato.)

In Castelli's laboratory I was getting to do something too few consumers are able to do. Most shops don't offer comparative samples of the oils they carry—the bottles are expensive for them, too. Still, it's easy to be disappointed, and I wish that every gourmet market followed the example of Zingerman's, in Ann Arbor, which urges customers to ask for a taste of any product before buying it.

The roundest oils at the Castelli tasting were from Tuscany and from the warmer Umbria, where oils are slightly sweeter. Castelli calls the two regions, respectively, the Bordeaux and the Burgundy of Italy. Like grapes, olives are sensitive to climate and, especially, soil, which is why before recommending varieties to a new grower Castelli will first study the pH of the area's soil. Although I admired an unfiltered oil, L'Albereto, which is the new top-of-the-line product of the well-established Badia a Coltibuono (and the only oil pressed entirely from its own olives), I found the Castello di Volpaia oil, which is made using a new pressing technique involving thousands of stainless-steel blades that repeatedly cut into olive paste, to have the deepest flavor.

A number of my favorites from the two regions didn't appear at the tasting. Two of the best Tuscan oils I've tried—fruity and suave—come from the wine-makers Castello di Ama (a former "small homage" oil just coming on to the market here) and San Felice, both in the heart of the Chianti Classico zone. Other first-rate Tuscan oils are Tenuta del Numerouno and Cacchiano. All these oils are powerful and unfiltered, with an elegance that takes the edge off any initial harshness. (Zingerman's, at 313-663-3400, sells these when they are available, and also a discerning selection of oils from Italy, Spain, France, and Greece. Olive oil, cheese, and bread are the primary obsessions of Ari Weinzwieg, who writes the store's invaluable newsletter and evaluates each oil vintage by vintage.)

Alfredo Mancianti, an Umbrian oil producer, plays a large role, with Piero Antolini, one of Italy's most respected journalists, in a newish group called the National Association of Master Oil Producers. Mancianti produced the first "cru" oils, guaranteed to come from certain hill-sides, and cleverly retained rights to the name Affiorato ("flowered"), which refers to the oil that is the very first to come

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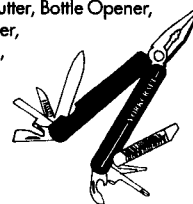
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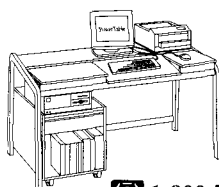
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from olives—the kind the workers at the press used to keep for themselves. All his excellent oils are distributed here. Available for less money and reliably high-quality is Olio Trevi, from a co-operative in Umbria; the Tuscan Azienda Impruneta in Chianti, also less expensive, is fine too. The adjacent Marches region produces the subtle, beautifully pure San Vito (these last three are sold by Dean & DeLuca, in New York, at 800-221-7714).

A number of chefs at Mediterranean restaurants in the United States favor the lighter culinary style of Liguria and the south of France, and would much rather use the gentle golden oils of Provence and the area around Nice than anything Italian. (Predictably, they describe these oils as "buttery.") It's a matter of preference. Several premium Spanish oils, particularly Nuñez de Prado (another "flowered" oil) and Lérida and L'Estornell, show well against almost any Italian oil, are as handsomely bottled, and usually cost less. Similar Spanish oils were bottled as Tuscan by some of the top names after the disastrous freeze of 1985.

Californians are now aiming to match the oils of the Mediterranean. So far they're better at packaging than they are at pressing oils that have any complexity or distinctive flavor—except for the popular flavored oils, which I place in the same circle of hell that flavored coffees occupy. Both products are attempts to juice up a base that is at best neutral and sometimes substandard. Also, herbs and hot pepper and garlic steeped in oil can shorten the oil's life.

An exception to the rule, though, is the fragrant Granverde, a premium oil from the Molise region: the oil maker, Marina Colonna, has revived an old tradition by pressing olives with lemons. It isn't like other flavored oils, because no steeping is involved. Only the oil from the lemon skin remains; the juice is discarded with the liquid from the olives. Zingerman's sells Agrumato, another delicious oil made the same way, from the Abruzzo region of Italy; the company also presses oil with oranges, with similarly spectacular results.

I have been disappointed by all the fancy California oils I've tried save for Olio D'Oro, from Harrison Vineyards, in an odd bottle with a yellow tree painted on it. This compares in sweetness and power to any top French or Italian oil—and costs just as much.

I MENTION so many brands of olive oil for a reason: most olive-oil labels don't tell you what you need to know. I do think it best to buy only olive oils called "extra virgin," but even that designation can be slippery. One of those comical terms, like "super colossal," that seem to congregate around olives, "extra virgin" suggests but does not guarantee an oil pressed at room temperature without chemicals or purifiers. For years all that was necessary to qualify for the name was a low level of free oleic acid, the principal fatty acid in oil. A high level of free oleic acid indicates careless handling of the olives and thus perishability and taste defects. All olive oil is naturally high in oleic acid itself, one of the vaunted mono-unsaturated fats; it does not taste sour, as "acid" implies.

New European Union guidelines call for "extra virgin" to imply quality in the mouth, not just in the test tube. Panels of at least eight tasters are now required to pass judgment on any oil that is to be called extra virgin. The reason for human evaluation is that second-rate olive oil can be chemically cleaned, or "rectified," and thus manipulated to fall into the extra-virgin category by chemical analysis alone. The cutting of true extra-virgin oil with rectified oil is distressingly common, and cases of it lead all other kinds of food and wine fraud investigations by a special section of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture.

Once an oil is rectified, usually by means of alkaline bleaches, and is deodorized, by steaming, it is utterly flavorless, and much of its vitamin content has been depleted—but it can still be called "pure olive oil," a once-common term on labels which was recently simplified to plain "olive oil." Olive oils called "light," marketed for people who dislike the taste of olive oil but want to reap its nutritional benefits, are simply lesser-grade oils that have been rectified. (And they contain just as many calories as any other oil: all pure fats, natural or synthesized, contain 120 calories per tablespoon.) For their standard nonlight olive oils big companies cut rectified oil with a small amount of the better stuff.

Labels won't tell you where oils really come from, either. Tuscans can charge an arm and a leg for an oil from the southern region of Puglia which has been labeled "Bottled in Siena." It's entirely likely that

charmingly designed cans of oil bearing nineteenth-century seals of approval and, prominently, the names of cities like Lucca and Gioia in fact contain oil from Tunisia: Italy is not only a great consumer but also Europe's largest importer of olive oil, much of which it repackages. Italians are now starting a program, similar to that for wines, which will guarantee place of origin for oils. (Look for the letters "DOC" on the label.) Castelli has persuaded his clients to put the date and place of pressing on their bottles and cans, along with obscure facts about the peroxide level and the acidity content. With luck his influence will spread.

Pull dates on labels are for three to eighteen months after the oil was bottled—which tells nothing about the date of pressing. There's no way to tell when or how the oil was produced. Oils are at their best within a year of pressing; many will keep fine for two years. After that they're still usable, but are best for cooking. You can't make oil last any longer. Refrigerating it will cause it to solidify—harmless but annoying. A cool, dark cupboard or cellar is the best place to keep oil, and the best kind of bottle is dark, even if most producers would rather vaunt the color in a clear bottle. The worst place to keep oil—and the most tempting—is next to the stove. If your house is usually hot, store a bottle of delicate oil in the refrigerator, leaving some out for daily use. I usually keep a few weeks' worth on the counter in a stainless-steel oil pitcher, and leave the rest of the bottle on the floor of my hall closet. This follows Italian family practice, which is to leave a small pitcher of oil on the table and the rest in the cellar.

ITALIAN family practice is naturally thrifty, too. That oil on the table is part of a two-tier strategy: paying top dollar for an oil to pour over salads and soups, and a much lower price for a reliable oil that will be fine for frying and sautéing. (Olive oil is well suited to frying, because of its fairly high smoke point.) One possibility for the second tier comes from Zingerman's: five-liter cans of L'Estornell, from a proudly organic Spanish producer of fine extra-virgin oils, priced at just \$32.99. This is a great bargain. Colavita, a producer of widely distributed oils from the Abruzzi, in the south of Italy, also markets a decent and well-priced ex-

tra-virgin oil, in three- and five-liter cans. Greek Gourmet, a fine extra-virgin oil brought in by an importer near Boston, is also available in three-liter cans. Look too for Peloponnese, an imported line of especially fine and well-priced Greek extra-virgin oils.

Beware of other bargains, though, which are frequently old, lifeless oils. I've chosen the brands just mentioned deliberately, and when buying or ordering them you should closely question the store manager to try to learn something about the oil's date of production.

The perfect companions for a two-tier strategy are the best of the many new books about the Mediterranean diet: Nancy Harmon Jenkins's *The Mediterranean Diet Cookbook* and Paula Wolfert's *Cooking of the Eastern Mediterranean*. Wolfert features several recipes that will show the virtues of cooking with a lower-priced but fresh oil: vegetables simmered for a long time in an oven set to a low temperature, closely covered with wet, crumpled parchment paper beneath a tight-fitting lid, in a mixture of olive oil, water, and a pinch of sugar ("to enrich the syrup, bring out the flavor, and help preserve the shape of the vegetable"). As she promises, the vegetables and oil "work beautifully together," particularly in one of my favorite vegetable dishes, green beans with onion and tomatoes. And the dishes are not greasy—olive oil's great virtue.

Jenkins, who only half-jokingly calls olive oil "nature's perfect food," the way the French talk about eggs, told me that much as she likes her hearty bean soups—particularly one with Tuscan white beans and farro, a newly popular ancient form of wheatberries (Dean & DeLuca carries it), and a Provençal chick-pea soup with orange zest and fennel seeds—she thinks of them primarily as vehicles for a final "thread" of the best, fruitiest olive oil the cook can afford.

The marriage of one of these soups with an expensive and wonderful oil will demonstrate why the oil merits the cost. I must say, though, that the indignation many people show toward olive-oil prices puzzles me. Remember the good deals on big cans of reliable extra-virgin oil, and Jenkins's use of "thread." Two or three bottles of mediocre wine can easily vanish during a party. A bottle of condiment-quality oil, bought for the same price, will keep you happy for months. ☛

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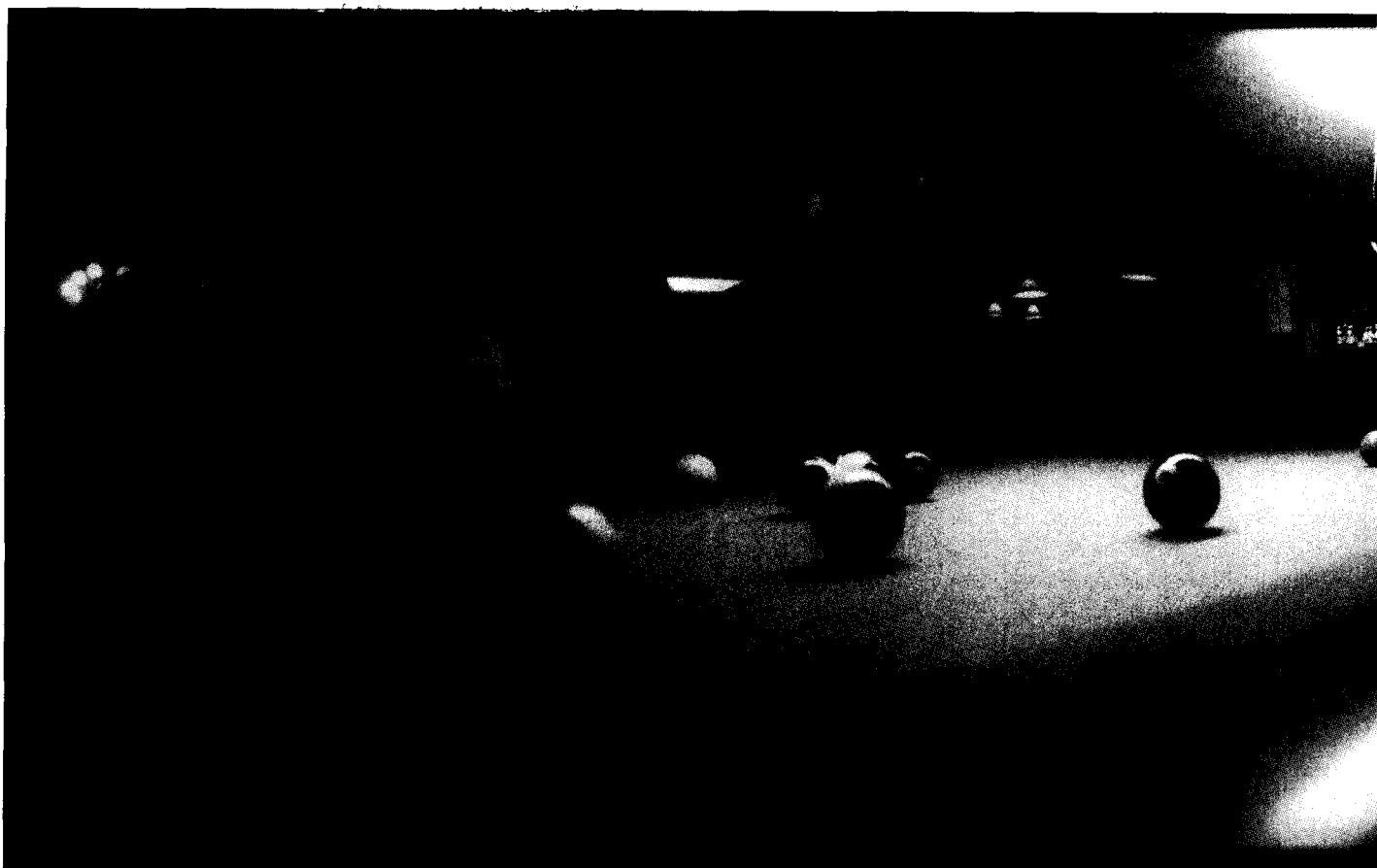
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Pool Sharks

*They're not what they seem to be,
and for good reason*

WE feel ambiguous about the pool shark. We praise his skill and condemn his dishonesty. After all, he commits the sin that Americans are least inclined to forgive—duplicity. He isn't what he seems to be. And yet, because the shark preys upon hubris—a human weakness that Americans particularly abhor—he is the sort of miscreant we tolerate or even encourage.

At a recent New England Nine Ball Championship, where a \$100 entry fee bought me the opportunity to be humiliated by two pros (after you lose once, you get a second chance—a process

called double elimination), I met a pool shark named Tom, a Boston Irishman still relatively young, although he had been a pool player for twenty-five years, and had three times been New England champion. Tom and I hit it off right from the start. When I invited him to my home

for an afternoon of pool,

by Peter Griffin

he said he'd be happy to come. Naturally, Tom did

not try to hustle me. He didn't need to. I knew immediately—he broke and ran out a game of eight ball—that he was a great player. At first I thought I wouldn't mind losing; after all, what chance did I have? And yet after I'd lost seventeen

games in a row, I felt sick with frustration and anger.

Eventually Tom and I talked about what is required to be a successful pool shark other than the ability to shoot an exquisite game. Tom said that first and foremost a shark needs a good night's sleep—every night, no matter how late he gets in. “Call any real player before noon,” Tom said, “and see what happens.” (I did, and I got Allen Hopkins, one of the best American players of the past twenty years, out of bed.) “Nothing affects the eyes like sleep—the lack of it,” Tom said. “And in pool the eyes are everything.”

“What about glasses?” I asked. “What about the guy who doesn't see too well? Can he ever get to be good enough?” I wear glasses.

“Glasses are a burden,” Tom said. “You have to train yourself to ignore what you see over them when you're down low to shoot.” But one of the best shooters in the country, Bill “Chickenman” Dunsmore, wears glasses so thick you'd call him handicapped. “The human mind's a wonder,” Tom said. “It compen-



sates for all kinds of things. A guy with glasses, with less than twenty-twenty vision, learns to shoot at the right part of the fuzzy ball. It may even be an advantage not to see long shots too clearly. Seeing too clearly encourages the shooter to be overprecise, to aim his stroke, making it an act of will rather than a function of a well-trained body." I had difficulty believing Tom's notion that poor vision could be an advantage, but I thanked him silently for the agreeable illusion.

Another component of hustling, Tom said, is the equipment. And part of the "equipment" is the appearance of the shark himself. First of all, he must be clean-cut: short hair, no moustache, no beard. He must be dressed conservatively. In town he must dress like a businessman in leisure clothes; in the country he needs to look like a hick, a hayseed. Most important, he must learn and adopt the sucker's barroom style, which says in every intonation of voice, every gesture (such as the way he handles his money—confusedly, carelessly paying for his drinks with crumpled bills, ignoring

his change), that he's out for a good time.

The shark needs the right pool cue—what pros call a Sneaky Pete. Available from most of the big-time manufacturers, the Sneaky Pete looks exactly like an ordinary one-piece cue except for a thin, almost indiscernible line at the joint where its two pieces screw together. But it is custom weighted, tipped, and balanced for the shark's game.

THE shark usually enters a bar with the shaft and the butt of the Pete already screwed together. The chances are slim that anyone will notice this, because the shark arrives just as the steady drinkers have become competitive, which is around 10:00 P.M. in most bars.

For a while the shark stands at the bar, holding his cue, buying beers for himself and, occasionally, for the guys near him. He drinks steadily and looks over at the table while he drinks, appearing anxious to shoot.

Now and then, when a decent shot is made, the shark feigns excitement. "Hell of a shot," he says to the bartender, who of course hasn't noticed. Then the shark turns to his drinking friends, shakes his head, and says loudly enough to be overheard, "Wow, they've got some good shooters around here." Then he buys another drink.

Eventually the shark is coaxed by his newfound buddies to put his quarters on the table—to be next up to shoot. By this time of night one player has taken possession of the table. More often than not this player, having won many drinks as well as a couple of hundred dollars, is contemptuous and cocky, and ready to be had.

The shark will never approach the evening's champion with a challenge. Nothing about a shark must even hint at his true ability or his intent. He must appear a gregarious dupe, ready and willing to be embarrassed and to call it fun.

The first question the shark asks is "What are the stakes here?" This takes the betting out of the personal range. It becomes a circumstance of the table that night. The night's big winner will always inflate the wager. If he's been playing eight ball for five dollars a rack, he will claim he's played all night for ten. At first the shark balks at playing for such a sum. He chalks up his cue. He considers.



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Perhaps the most important skill a shark has is the ability to imitate a novice's game. A novice has predictable and readily identifiable mannerisms, which the shark has practiced until they are second nature. First of all, a novice talks—before, after, and sometimes even during his shooting. Second, when a novice thinks he's shooting well (he has sunk two or three balls), he moves quickly around the table to position himself for the next shot. This is to say, "Now I'm playing for real." Finally, the stroke of a novice is short, stabbing. And on a difficult or a crucial shot his body contracts and sways as he aims. His grip on the butt tightens; the cue tip moves from side to side.

A novice usually laughs when he misses. And if the quality of pool at a particular table is generally poor, the shark, too, will laugh when he intentionally dogs a ball or intentionally miscues. His laugh, like the novice's, will be light and silly, as if to say that for him, missing is enjoyable. On the other hand, if the shark is up against a fairly decent shooter, he will affect the pose of "the Pretender."

The Pretender is also a novice, but of a different sort. Unable to run even a dozen balls, despite a year or two at the game, the Pretender, when he misses, sneers at the table and grins wryly at his opponent and any onlookers. This performance indicates that such a miss is extraordinary.

If the shark is successful in luring that night's champion into a bet—and the champion must be the one to challenge, for this shows that the champion has the energy and desire to keep going long enough to make the shark's efforts worthwhile—the shark must lose the first game. (One exception: defeat a man in front of his girl and he'll pursue victory to his last dollar.) And yet he must make it close enough to let the champion feel that he, the shark, really had a chance. Once money has been exchanged, once the champion has taken the shark's money on that first game, even if only from a two-dollar bet, the odds are the shark will clean the champion out. To do this he must rely on two essential strategies. One is haste: the shark must get the bet up quickly. The easiest method is "double or nothing."

"How much have you lost?" the shark will always ask. Never "How much have I won?" "All right," he'll say. "Last game. Double or nothing." This is the champion's chance for redemption. He can get

out square, and with his ego intact. The shark knows it's a bet no sucker can refuse. Of course, the shark has no intention of letting it be the last game.

The second strategy, patience, is as necessary as haste. The more a champion loses, the quicker his game will become. He will express, through his rapid, nervous play, the desperate urgency that is creeping into his heart. This is the time when the shark does all his fussing at the table: he will discuss his shot aloud, with himself or with one or two onlookers. Between shots he always needs a sip of beer.

The shark has one great advantage over a bar player. The shark has trained in a poolroom, on a regulation table nine feet by four and a half feet. The usual bar table is only seven feet by three and a half feet. The difference the size makes is phenomenal. To the shark, no shot on a seven-foot table is a "long" shot. And the short balls are child's play. Just seeing that little table, with its bigger pockets, its forgiving banks (a ball can hit the rail a diamond above a pocket and still go in), gives the shark all the confidence he needs. He believes he can make any shot on this table. And usually he can.

Success for the shark means two things: first, he must win two or three hundred dollars, or two or three thousand—depending on where the games are played—for a night's work. Second, he must never have let the champion know that he, the shark, is the better player. His success must seem to be all luck, a consequence of the champion's own, easily forgivable mistakes. If the shark accomplishes this, he can return to the bar again and again, and reap a harvest from whoever is the big winner that night. By losing occasionally, the shark can acquire and maintain a reputation for being "just a lucky guy." The worst mistake a shark can make is to allow himself anger: to be so offended by the idiocy, the rudeness, the egotism, of his opponent that he gives in to the temptation to show off.

I thought that being a pool shark sounded wonderful. But how many players can achieve the perception of a psychotherapist, the self-discipline of a monk, and the skill of a general surgeon? "Just a few," Tom said. "Just a few." ☞

Special thanks to The Billiard Club, in New York City, for allowing the photographer to use their location.

Cormac McCarthy's Bizarre Genius

A reclusive master of language and the picaresque, on a roll

by John W. Aldridge

MANY writers of average talent make unearned demands upon our attention and too often get it—but Cormac McCarthy belongs to a very different breed. For one thing, he is not of average talent but fantastically gifted. For another, he makes absolutely no demands on anybody's attention, whereas his work deserves the closest attention we are able to give it.

Over the first twenty-five years of his life as a writer McCarthy published five novels, each of them extraordinary in its own unique way, and written in language of a beauty and power seldom seen. Yet during that time McCarthy remained almost completely unknown except to a modest coterie of passionate admirers.

McCarthy has done everything possible to preserve this anonymity—or, more accurately, he has done nothing to challenge it. In fact, he has steadfastly refused to perform any of the functions that most writers are eager to perform. The list of his refusals is reminiscent of the card Edmund Wilson printed up, enumerating no fewer than twenty-one literary services he declined to provide to those who had the temerity to ask for them. Like Wilson, McCarthy declines to grant interviews (except for one he gave reluctantly, at the urging of his agent, to *The New York Times Magazine* in April of 1992), deliver lectures, give public readings, attend writers' conferences, teach courses; like Faulkner, he strongly prefers not to talk about his work. For years he cultivated his obscurity so assiduously that the information released by his publisher consisted of little more than the year of his birth, the barest details of his education, and the names of some of the places where he had lived.

As a result, among the few people who knew of him at all, remarkable rumors freely circulated. It was said that he had lived for a while under an oil derrick in

West Texas; had at one time been a destitute and homeless person who roamed the back streets and cadged drinks in the sleazier bars of Knoxville, Tennessee; had been, and perhaps still was, a truck-driver and a ditchdigger; and, what is at least approximately true, had lived for long periods in cheap motel rooms where

he subsisted on canned food warmed on hot plates. Very much in the manner of Thomas Pynchon, about whose personal life and whereabouts virtually nothing has ever been made public, McCarthy preserved his privacy to such a degree that it became the most reliable fact known about him.



But then, with great suddenness and perhaps, depending on one's point of view, a bit mysteriously, a large weight of public recognition fell upon McCarthy. In 1992 his sixth novel, *All the Pretty Horses*, the first volume of The Border Trilogy, was published and won for him both the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award, along with a host of highly laudatory reviews and the honor of having all his books reissued in the Vintage paperback series. Whether such unaccustomed largesse will shock McCarthy into complete silence or impel him to undertake even more frantic flights into hermitry remains to be seen. But this much may be said: his public obscurity for so many years was both deliberate on his part and to some extent well deserved.

WHEREAS even a sophisticated reader on first looking into Joyce's *Ulysses* might well wonder about the meaning of what is going on, a reader on first looking into McCarthy's early fiction might well wonder just *what* is going on. For McCarthy appeared purposely to scatter obstacles to a ready comprehension of his work in much the way that he forestalled invasions of his privacy.

In his first three novels, *The Orchard Keeper* (1965), *Outer Dark* (1968), and *Child of God* (1973), barely visible figures move through a landscape that is as precisely delineated as they are vaguely defined. Often they appear to be in mid-passage, hitchhiking down a dusty red-clay road, coming from some unknown place, going anywhere or nowhere. Or they are figures initially identified only as "he," "she," and "they," *he* on a road into a town where he asks for work, *she* on a road inquiring if anyone has seen *him*, *they* "parodic figures transposed live and intact and violent out of a proletarian mural and set mobile upon the empty fields, advancing against the twilight, the droning bees and windtilted clover"—*they* about to do something to someone, something probably terrible.

As these narratives develop, they tend to become nonsequential, looping backward into the past and forward again to the present, and splitting into brief episodes that involve different people who may or may not have a significant place in the action that is to follow. Now and again these episodes are portentous

with tantalizing clues to a secret that seems just on the verge of being disclosed but never is. Sometimes he, she, and they are identified, but furtively and usually only once—so that their names become quickly buried in the lushly described foliage of the natural landscape and may easily be passed over unnoticed.

But after a while one realizes that although the principal characters may be shadowy and strange, the social milieu through which they move is not. It is familiar Faulkner country, transplanted from Mississippi to the backwoods of East Tennessee. The people who populate it are standard redneck types: mostly impoverished and illiterate; some feeble-minded; given to casual rape, murder, spontaneous mayhem, and brother-sister or father-daughter incest; fond of coon dogs, squirrel rifles, chewing tobacco, snuff-dipping, and corn whiskey. They tend to inhabit shacks made of rough-cut, unpainted vertical pine boards that after a while warp and bend and weather to a dirty gray and that are lined inside by sheets of tin or tacked-up layers of old newspapers. There they subsist on fat-back, turnip greens, blackeyed peas, cornbread made from white meal only, hog chitlins, store-bought bologna, and now and then fish, game, or fowl when they can catch, trap, shoot, or steal it.

This is all well-known territory, patented and perfected by the old master himself, to whom, not incidentally, McCarthy has freely acknowledged a considerable debt. But the difference is fundamental, and crucial. What is missing from McCarthy's treatment of the material is all those elaborate socio-moral codifications with which Faulkner gave formal structure and thematic coherence to the complex life of Yoknapatawpha County. The Compson and Sartoris families preserved from the pre-Civil War southern tradition a moral code that taught them, according to Faulkner, "courage and honor and pride, and pity and love of justice and of liberty." But posed against them and in part responsible for their ultimate defeat were the squalid and degenerate representatives of the new postwar industrial South, families like the Snopeses, who lived by nothing but rapacity and greed, and dead-souled figures like Joe Christmas in *Light in August* and Popeye in *Sanctuary*.

These two sets of characters form the

polarities of a kind of communal order, however fragile, and the contrast between them provided Faulkner with a basis for social commentary and moral judgment and also a means of placing them within the context of southern history. In addition, the struggle of the Compsons and the Sartorises to remain faithful to the tenets of their chivalric code against the force of lawlessness embodied by the Snopeses and their ilk created the primary dramatic tension that energized the bulk of Faulkner's fiction. The world of McCarthy's first three novels, however, seems populated only by Snopeses, Christmases, and Popeyes, and no trace of communal order and history or any basis for moral judgment or conflict is to be found anywhere in it.

All three, in fact, contain actions that in traditional fiction would be expected to provide essential materials for the revelation of character and the achievement of dramatic climax. But these are depicted against a background of such unrelieved ideological emptiness that customary expectation is defeated, and they are made to seem as devoid of thematic relevance as any odd *acte gratuit* in Camus or Gide.

THE *Orchard Keeper*, the first and in many ways the most enigmatic of the early novels, includes several such actions, all of them occurring in the Tennessee backcountry near Knoxville during the thirties. Marion Sylder, a bootlegger, kills a man named Kenneth Rattner for trying to steal his car. Sylder dumps the body into a pit located in an abandoned peach orchard. The body remains there, slowly decomposing, for some years, and during that time is discovered by Arthur Ownby, an old recluse and the "keeper" of the orchard. Ownby cuts a small cedar tree and drops it down over the body to help neutralize the stench. He returns every subsequent year at Christmastime to add another tree, presumably to prevent others from finding the body and intruding upon his privacy. The dead man turns out to be the long-absent father of John Wesley Rattner, a young boy who is befriended by both Sylder and Ownby but who never learns of his father's death or of the body in the pit.

The barely characterized characters of *Outer Dark* are an incestuous brother and sister, Culla and Rinthy Holme, who wander the countryside in search of their

stolen child, a search that ends in the child's murder. The main character of *Child of God* is a rural Tennessee necrophile named Lester Ballard who kills several women, copulates with their bodies, and then stores them in a cave where they are eventually discovered. Ballard is confined in a cage at the state hospital for the criminally insane and dies there, and his body is shipped to a medical school to be dissected.

These novels, for all their sanguinary gruesomeness, have an air of such wholesome self-satisfaction about being exactly what they are that they seem immune from the standard artificialities of a fictional plot. It is as if McCarthy had decided long ago that plot was quite irrelevant to his purposes. Aristotle and E. M. Forster, with their insistence on thematic unity and a causally connected sequence of narrative events, would not have approved.

Yet the very plotlessness of these novels has a curiously appropriate relationship to the kinds of characters they concern. If the absence of plot represents a violation of one Aristotelian law, it does obey another—that of decorum or truth to type. For the existence of plot depends upon the existence of organic form and, above all, of a memory of past events as helping to shape events of the present and future. But McCarthy's people have virtually no memory and no power of conceptual intelligence. They do not induce a principle of causality from the raw data to which their senses dimly respond. Things simply happen to them in a timeless, dreamlike existential void, and they are aware of them only at the moment when they happen, and then only in the form of brief ganglionic twitches.

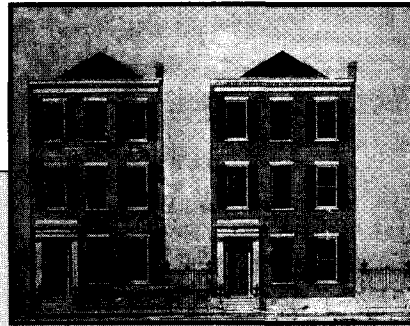
They also do not inhabit the kind of world that the mechanisms of plot traditionally require in order to function effectively. McCarthy's characters are completely isolated and unsocialized, do no work, inhabit no community, obey no law unless one is forced upon them from outside, and own no property. Lester Ballard inhabits a series of hovels he does not own and finally moves his harem of corpses into a cave. Culla and Rinthy Holme wander aimlessly from abandoned cabins to other people's houses. When asked at one point whether she has run off from somewhere, Rinthy replies, "No... I ain't even got nowheres to run off from," and later she says, "I don't live

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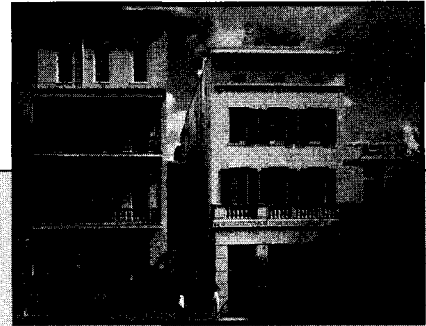
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nowheres no more. . . I never did much."

The roads on which she and her brother separately travel either lead nowhere or end in scenes of gratuitous violence. But the journey of the reader through McCarthy's language, though arduous and often confusing, is marked by adventure and mystery all along the way and ends in discoveries of crucial thematic significance. One is that through some abstruse lexical chemistry the language becomes established as the authoritative character of these novels, and as such it declares its sovereignty over the other characters by creating a context in which they take on a richness of meaning that they do not in themselves possess. In dozens of passages like the following, one can see the process in operation:

[Four crows]. . . watched the cat come across the field at a slow lope, an erratic dancing progress where she veered and leapt, keeping to the spotty dry ground. . . They came from the roost and defiled low over her head, dipping and swooping. The cat spun low on her haunches, batted at them. So did they harry her out of the field, her pausing at each attack to make a stand and grapple at the wind of their passage, hard-pressed to preserve dignity, the birds flaring, wheeling, setting to again in high crude humor. They left her at the bank of the creek. . . Here she crossed and continued, taking the high wooded ground on the south bank . . . until a strong odor of mink musk brought her to the creek proper again.

The mink was dead, swaying in the shore currents among the swamped and flaring grass. She crept to it on cocked legs . . . and swatted it with a long reach downward. She stood up and watched it. It bobbed lifelessly. . . Finally she . . . bit into the neck of the animal. The grit impregnated in its fur set her teeth on edge and she attacked it savagely, then stopped suddenly as if her attention had wandered or returned to something of importance which she had forgotten. She left the mink and set a course across the fields toward the pike road. . . Just short of the road she stopped, shivered her loose skin, ears flat against her head.

—The Orchard Keeper

Mr Suttree it is our understanding that . . . you betook yourself to various low places . . . and there did squander

several ensuing years in the company of thieves, derelicts, miscreants, pariahs, poltroons, spalpeens, curmudgeons, clotpolls, murderers, gamblers, bawds, whores, trulls, brigands, topers, tosspots, sots and archsots, lobcocks, smellsmocks, runagates, rakes, and other assorted and felonious debauchees.

—Suttree

The first effect of the dense and arcane texture of the prose is a mechanical one. It drastically reduces one's reading rate and demands a close attentiveness to individual words and phrases. The result is that through an odd process of osmotic transference the language seems to suffuse with a quality of sentience and intellectual discrimination events that are often simply commonplace or ugly, and characters—even when they are not specifically described—who are notably deficient in all but the most rudimentary powers of perception. The contrast, in fact, between the richness of the language and the bleakness of the material generates a raw discordant energy that comes to replace the tensions between personalities which are the usual sources of dramatic interest in more conventional fiction.

In many passages like the latter one quoted, in which the prose takes on a weight of archaisms and latinate constructions, yet another dimension of meaning is created. For such language inevitably recalls the great tradition of classic literary English, the precedent established in the sixteenth century by John Lyly in the flowery rhetoric of his *Euphues*, by Shakespeare, by the King James Bible, and by writers like Sir Thomas Browne, Laurence Sterne, Oliver Goldsmith, Dickens, and Joyce (particularly in the closing parodic sections of *Ulysses*). These echoes provide a reminder of a rich historical background for a fiction in which little or nothing from the past is remembered and the characters live in an eternal present illuminated neither by thought nor by any capacity to verbalize their experience.

SUTTREE (1979) and *Blood Meridian, or The Evening Redness in the West* (1985), the two novels that immediately precede *All the Pretty Horses*, clearly anticipate the changes in setting, scope, and content which occur in that novel. The title character of *Suttree*, Cornelius

Suttree, is the first of McCarthy's people to possess something like sophisticated intelligence, and he inhabits a landscape larger, more densely populated, and more vividly rendered than the cramped, claustrophobic worlds of the earlier novels.

Suttree is a youngish, apparently educated dropout from an affluent upbringing who, in the mid-1950s, has elected to live in a dilapidated houseboat on the Tennessee River just outside Knoxville. There he fishes for a bare living and consorts with a Dickensian tribe of wretched lowlife characters who drift with him in and out of the city's more squalid riverfront bars and who tend to die early from either drink or violent confrontations with the police. During the course of these activities, which are presented in the form of episodes that seldom connect with one another, Suttree befriends an illiterate country boy who is spending time in a workhouse for copulating with watermelons and who survives on the outside by stealing coins from pay telephones and by bounty-hunting bats, which he kills by shooting pieces of meat soaked in strychnine into the air with a slingshot.

Suttree also becomes involved with a call girl, with whom he has what is the first genuinely romantic relationship to occur in McCarthy's fiction. But she terminates it in a moment of mysterious madness by suddenly going berserk and smashing up the interior of their new car. His other amatory relationship ends with equal abruptness when the girl, who lives with her family on the riverbank, is killed by a landslide during a rainstorm.

As such bizarre incidents proliferate, the novel takes on considerable physical weight but does not grow in profundity. Part of the reason is that Suttree himself does not enlarge his understanding of his experience. In spite of his intelligence, he remains almost to the end essentially what he was at the beginning—an oddly benumbed participant in events that he does not respond to or interpret, a ghostly figure seemingly without self-awareness even when from time to time he randomly recalls painful incidents from his childhood which ought to tell him something about the subsequent course and meaning of his life.

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The Golan Heights

To Whom Do They Belong? Can Israel Survive Without Them?

Now that Gaza and part of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") have been turned over to the Palestinians, the clamor for peace with Syria becomes ever more strident. It is understood that in order to attain such peace, it will be necessary for Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shelling, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotic-dealing

and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed at Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both

"With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

of which Syria totally rejects.

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of PanAm flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the

largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a crest. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of the 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syri-

an hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of

tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

The current Israeli government, in its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, would seem prepared to give up the limited strategic security it now enjoys by virtue of its possession of the high ground—the ridges of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights. But Israel should not return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, all of which—except for the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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conceivable variety of barbarism to be found anywhere in our literature. In it McCarthy leaves behind, perhaps for good, the Tennessee environment, and ventures into the Southwest and Mexico, the territory of *The Border Trilogy*, a work for which this novel might be seen as a dress rehearsal. But if it is, it is a macabre, undoubtedly parodic rehearsal, for one of its major effects is to demolish for good and all the grand old romantic myth of the western frontier, to take the materials glorified by Frederic Remington and transform them, in prose, into a vastly inglorious tapestry as it might have been painted by the younger Brueghel, Bosch, or the later Goya of *Los desastres de la guerra* and *May 2, 1808*, and *May 3, 1808*.

The action begins in 1849 when a fifteen-year-old boy joins a band of American cutthroats and brigands to fight in Mexico and search for and kill Gómez, the leader of the Apaches, for a reward of a thousand dollars. The greater part of the narrative consists of a panoramic overview of frontier warfare. A representative scene records the aftermath of a Comanche attack on the Americans.

Now driving in a wild frieze of headlong horses with eyes walled and teeth cropped and naked riders with clusters of arrows clenched in their jaws and their shields winking in the dust and up the far side of the ruined ranks in a piping of boneflutes . . . until they had circled the company and cut their ranks in two and then rising up again like funhouse figures, some with nightmare faces painted on their breasts, riding down the unhorsed Saxons and spearing and clubbing them and leaping from their mounts with knives . . . and stripping the clothes from the dead and seizing them up by the hair and passing their blades about the skulls of the living and the dead alike and snatching aloft the bloody wigs and hacking and chopping at the naked bodies, ripping off limbs, heads, gutting the strange white torsos and holding up great handfuls of viscera, genitals, some of the savages so slathered up with gore they might have rolled in it like dogs and some who fell upon the dying and sodomized them with loud cries to their fellows.

Such atrocities—and they proliferate throughout the novel—more than confirm McCarthy's vision of human beings as the most vicious and bloodthirsty

members of the animal kingdom. But that vision is provided with a philosophical rationale of a sort by one of the Americans, a man named Judge Holden. The Judge is a huge messianic figure, a kind of Ahab crossed with Conrad's Kurtz crossed with Charlton Heston's Moses, who delivers pompous and opaque pronouncements on the action and oracularly asserts in the defense of it that the only truly divine work of man on earth is war, because "war is god."

In a novel of such relentless purity of narrative line, in which the action either speaks for itself or does not, the introduction of the Judge comes as a distinctly awkward violation of decorum. It appears to be evidence of McCarthy's discomfort with yet fatal attraction to the manufacture of transcendental codifications for work that is fully explained and justified by its own unremitting adherence to the external values of the secular world.

IN a sense, *All the Pretty Horses* seems to represent McCarthy's allegiance to the authority of the secular. For it is largely a novel of vigorous, almost rollicking physical action uncontaminated by any of the abstruse theologies of higher thought, and it is cast in the form of a sweeping picaresque tale of adventure in the modern Southwest and Mexico.

Perhaps the copious bloodletting of the previous novel purged McCarthy's system of its darker poisons and restored him to what in another writer would be considered normal health. In the process he has left behind, at least for the recuperative moment, the tradition of Faulknerian southern pathogothic and embraced the more robust heritage of Mark Twain and Zane Grey. The narrative plot is clearly defined, and it is classically familiar: Huck (without Jim) and Tom Sawyer light out for unknown territory to discover their manhood by successfully confronting the harsh adversities of life. The suspense and excitement of pilgrimage into mystery, characters who have some recognizable human dimension, and language that is at times clear and concrete to the point of sounding Hemingwayish all combine to make this novel wonderfully good reading and easily account for McCarthy's sudden ascent on the strength of it into popular acceptance and critical acclaim.

The story primarily concerns two teen-

age boys from Texas, John Grady Cole and his friend Lacey Rawlins, who set off on horseback for Mexico. On the way they are joined by one Jimmy Blevins, a vaguely sinister younger boy who rides a beautiful horse that is undoubtedly stolen and who shows himself to be a brilliant marksman by drilling a hole through the exact center of Rawlins's wallet when it is tossed into the air. After a series of adventures, Cole and Rawlins find jobs herding and breaking wild horses on a large ranch belonging to Don Héctor Rocha y Villareal, a rich Mexican. The long passages describing John Grady's method of gentling the horses as he prepares them for the saddle are among the finest in the book, and reveal not only McCarthy's mastery of an arcane subject but also his Balzacian obsessiveness with the tiniest details of physical process.

Yet here, in the midst of this sublime celebration of equestrian technology, something starts to go seriously wrong with McCarthy's command of his narrative. The boys begin to fade out as convincingly delineated characters and to take on the attributes of Hollywood Wild West clichés. John Grady becomes a younger but equally laconic John Wayne, stalwartly busting bucking broncos with his loyal but slightly dim-witted sidekick. When not doing that, they ride the range together, eat beans and tortillas beside the campfire, and bed down in their saddle blankets under the heavenly canopy of stars.

Later on they fight the bad guys—in this case not Indians but sadistic members of the Mexican police who arrest and imprison them on trumped-up charges brought by their employer, Rocha, because Joan Grady has stolen the purity of Rocha's beautiful young daughter, Alejandra. In daring to make love to Alejandra, John Grady has clearly broken the rules, and in so doing, he has forced his creator to break his own. McCarthy, who has previously kept clear of all literary conventions he did not invent for himself, has here placed himself under the authority of a crass, formulaic view of experience, with the result that he no longer knows what to do except to follow the dictates of the formula. McCarthy's aim has also been deflected by the kind of territory into which the formula has led him—the potentially dangerous because not viscerally understood area of human emotions and relationships.

His treatment of such matters in the past has been at best perfunctory and mostly confined to quick rolls in the hay. When the forces of social order, responsibility, and commitment have threatened to intrude, he has always been able to retreat back into raw nature, the elemental and unthreatening world of animals, plants, and prelapsarian humanoid creatures, where he has felt most at home. But now, forced to confront these more civilized realities by the chosen requirements of his plot, he falls into a language not his own, and in his treatment of the love connection begins to croon in the saccharine tones of a lady romance novelist. By the time John Grady is released from prison and returns to the ranch, and Alejandra, in the name of her family honor, rejects his impassioned entreaties to ride off with him into the sunset, nothing is left but the doleful swelling of the background music and the welcome descent of the final curtain.

The Crossing, the second volume of the trilogy, has to do with an entirely new set of characters and contains no reference to either the people or the events of the first volume. The action concerns two teenage brothers, Billy and Boyd Parham, who have settled with their parents on a cattle ranch in New Mexico at some time in the late 1930s. The first and by far the most convincing section of the novel centers on Billy's obsession with a she-wolf who has been killing their cattle and is finally caught in one of their traps. Billy believes that the wolf has wandered north from Mexico, and he becomes determined to take her back there and free her where she can be close to her own kind. He accordingly sets off across the border with the animal tied behind his horse.

After various encounters with the Mexican peasantry Billy is briefly taken into custody, while the wolf is placed in a carnival sideshow arena to fight some vicious dogs. When Billy finally manages to escape from his captors, he finds the wolf badly hurt and dying, shoots her, and takes her body with him into the mountains of Chihuahua, where he buries her. He then returns home and discovers that his parents have been murdered and their horses stolen, presumably by Mexican Indians. His younger brother, Boyd, has somehow survived, and together they ride back into Mexico hoping to track down the killers.



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On the way they encounter a young girl who persuades them to take her along. They then become involved in a series of adventures, some hazardous, some trivial, which culminates in the sudden disappearance of Boyd and the girl. Billy searches for them across a fair portion of Mexico, but does not find them. He returns home, but after failing to be accepted for military service at the outbreak of the Second World War, he goes back to Mexico and resumes the search.

The major events in the remainder of the novel are apparently intended to serve as counterpoint to those of the first section, since they involve a recurrence of the opening motifs of violent death and the transport and burial of a corpse, this time human rather than animal. They are also interspersed with a number of long conversations, many of them in Spanish, with various peasant philosophers about the nature of the cosmos and the larger meanings of human existence, which are somehow not so jarringly intrusive as similar sorties into abstraction were in some of the earlier novels. At the end Billy, like John Grady, is on the road again, drifting from one menial job to another, having nothing to show for his wandering and presumably destined to come to nothing.

Very much like Saul Bellow, who in *The Adventures of Augie March* broke free of the suffocating neatness of his earlier novels, "kicked over the traces," as he put it, and "wrote catch-as-catch-can, picaresque," McCarthy has here given himself up more completely than he did in *All the Pretty Horses* to the seductive freedoms and excesses of the picaresque form. He has even sacrificed his heavily allusive prose style to it and adopted a much simpler, almost journalistically expository language. At the same time, he has wisely resisted the temptation to resort to any of the stale formulas of western and romance fiction which so seriously flawed that first volume of the trilogy.

Yet as a result of these abandonments, and still showing virtually no interest in the exploration of character, he is left with simply a sweeping chronicle of physical events, some of which are quite expertly described but which culminate in neither revelation nor resolution.

Since the trilogy is not yet complete, we don't know what all this may ulti-

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mately signify. But the evidence up to now indicates that although McCarthy is clearly a major literary talent with a mastery of language equaled only by that of his most distinguished contemporaries, Pynchon and William Gaddis, he possesses an extremely narrow vision of the human condition and almost no vision at all of the subtler complexities of human feeling and thought. These deficiencies began to be evident in the early fiction but were to a degree camouflaged by the

high elegance of the prose and the idiosyncratic originality of his fictional forms. In the first two books of the trilogy they have become clearly visible, because the prose is no longer elegant and the form is wide open and relentlessly picaresque. Whether the final volume will vindicate McCarthy and infuse the entire work with sudden blinding illumination remains to be seen. Given his abundant gifts, however, something magical may well occur. ☼

BRIEF REVIEWS



Shear

by Tim Parks.

Grove, 211 pages, \$21.00.

Nicholson, the protagonist of Mr. Parks's novel, is an English geologist sent to a Mediterranean island to inspect a quarry. He has with him his very young mistress, whose "explosion had blown off the weathered crust on him, taken both of them to a primitive state of fused magma." There is a good deal of this sort of metaphor in a tale told entirely through the thoughts and sensations of a man who habitually translates reality into mineral terms. By the time Nicholson asks himself why he is "forever casting about for analogies instead of dealing quickly and sensibly with the facts, forever chasing the kind of insubstantial profundities that preceded sleep," the reader is tempted to ask, Why indeed? For there is a plot underlying pluton and graining patterns and crystal stress. Nicholson is troubled by heat and glaring sun, and bedeviled by women. There are the mistress, the enigmatic local doxy whom he carelessly acquires, the complaining wife back in England, and a widow whose husband was killed on a construction job by a piece of stone from the quarry. She has come all the way from Australia seeking explanation or revenge or both. Nicholson is lured into taking an interest in the widow's troubles, which ul-

timately forces him to make decisions in terms of people and ethical responsibility rather than feldspar and biotite. This is a type of "shear"—incompatible pressures exerted on rock—to which Nicholson is not accustomed, and the problem posed by the novel is, How will the man react to it? That question becomes provocative and exciting.

D-Day

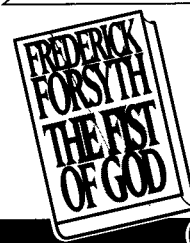
by Stephen E. Ambrose.

Simon & Schuster, 656 pages, \$30.00.

"June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II"—the subtitle is a fair description of what Mr. Ambrose considers, with good reason, to be one of the most remarkable military operations in history. His account of D-Day skillfully combines official facts with the personal recollections of survivors, both Allied and Axis. It is a complicated story, from debate over the site of the proposed landings, to the intricate equipment employed, to the difficulties of assembling the enormous Allied force, to the charades that kept the Nazis uncertain and confused about what that force would do. There was also, of course, the collection of intelligence about the battle terrain and a minute-by-minute schedule of the proposed action. The information on the terrain was inade-

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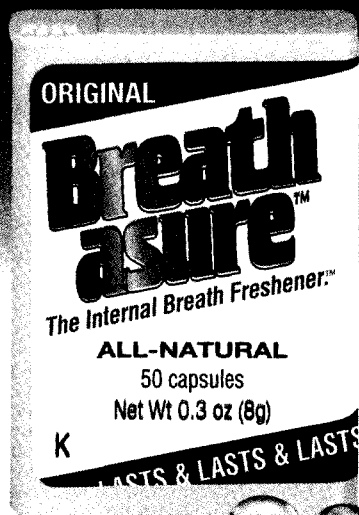
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quate and the schedule went to pot at the opening move, forcing Allied troops to do what they could rather than what they had been assigned to do. That sort of thing led a Navy man, scrabbling along with a rifle in an infantry group, to complain that it was just what he had joined the Navy to avoid. While Allied troops improvised, Nazi troops followed their pre-attack orders, and those orders remained unchanged because most German commanders were miles away, attending a conference or otherwise engaged or "rendered immobile by the intricacies of the leadership principle in the Third Reich." There have been other books about D-Day and will be more, but it seems unlikely that any can more effectively combine information on material details (including the fantastic but effective British contraptions known as Hobart's Funnies) and command decisions with anecdotal accounts of what men saw, horrible or ludicrous, and did, heroic or stupid, on that terrible, improbably successful day.

The Impossible Country

by Brian Hall.

Godine, 352 pages, \$23.95.

Mr. Hall traveled around Yugoslavia in the last months before the country shattered into secession and civil war. It was not his first visit, so he had friends to stay with and connections to re-establish. He could get about, talking to people and listening to people, and Mr. Hall is a fine listener. He knows the relevant history, too, and when Croat nationalists maintain that Bosnia "'had always belonged to Croatia,'" can inform the reader that the claim is based "on an interpretation of a somewhat obscure passage in the historical writings of the tenth-century Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus." Similar old claims, along with equally old feuds and group stereotypes, lurked behind the surface opinions of almost all of Mr. Hall's informants, while almost all of them also professed a desire for peaceful cooperation and a belief that diplomacy would bring that about. Mr. Hall does not accuse the Yugoslavs of hypocrisy. He presents, with sympathy and frequently with humor, the inhabitants of a country that never was a country, a disparate people who were never

united except by their resentment of a foreign conqueror. The book is a tragic portrait and an excellent piece of reporting.

The Bird Artist

by Howard Norman.

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 289 pages, \$20.00.

The time of Mr. Norman's novel is 1911; the setting is Witless Bay, a coastal village in Newfoundland; and the narrator is Fabian Vas, a young man who draws birds when he is not busy at the boatyard or making love to a hotheaded young woman named Margaret. Fabian is on the way to modest success as a bird artist, but he is uncertain, somewhat inarticulate, and altogether too immature to resist his parents' determination to marry him off to a cousin whom he has never met. His parents' situation is no enticement to matrimony and provokes a blowup that converts Fabian's wedding into gruesome farce. The subsequent sorting out of guilt and retribution is not happy, but it is a fine example of a family and a close-knit community holding the law at bay. Mr. Norman writes well, in a stripped-down style that suggests a Viking galley—nothing superfluous, everything present working to perfection.

Love and Hatred

by William L. Shirer.

Simon & Schuster, 400 pages, \$25.00.

It would be heresy worthy of the stake to suggest that Leo Tolstoy was less than a great novelist, but it is surely safe to describe him as an abominable husband. Mr. Shirer's account of what he subtitled "The Troubled Marriage of Leo and Sonya Tolstoy" attempts to be fair both to the self-righteous genius and to his overworked, overemotional, and eventually neurotic wife, and succeeds insofar as it covers their differences. It does not explain how they ever stood each other at all (at times they certainly did), nor does it offer extensive information not already available to anyone acquainted with the miseries of that reciprocally willful and inconsiderate couple. The book may be considered a hike over a largely well-traveled trail, very well conducted for a companion unfamiliar with the territory.

—by Phoebe-Lou Adams



THE PUZZLER

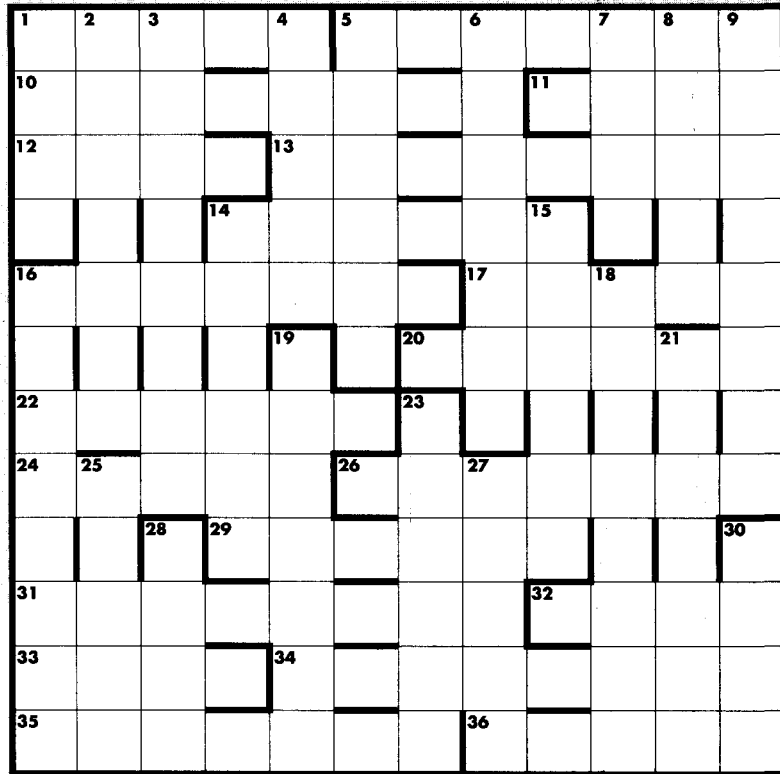
by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Wrong Number

(acknowledgments to Ximenes of the *Observer*)

Clues are normal, but are numbered incorrectly. Each answer is to be entered in the grid at a number corresponding to a different clue of the same length. The clue at the appropriate number happens to contain a definition of the answer to be entered at that number. The recommended procedure is to solve a clue and then find a definition of the answer in one of the seven other clues to words of the same length. Answers include five proper nouns.

See page 94 for Puzzler contest details.
The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 96.



Across

1. Three: wrong number? (5)
5. Rose's rocking in recording marked with an "X" (7)
10. Trix star dancing with knight (8)
11. Guy with manuscript shows hesitation (4)
12. Ran from bee atop the French Duke's head (4)
13. Red holds new tuner back (8)
14. Cleverest jet loops base (6)
16. A soldier in front of London gallery displays ruffle (7)
17. Specified change of admen (5)
20. Penny Fitzgerald taking author's beginning Spanish course (6)
22. United Nations shut up by a staff, more or less (6)
24. Milk cow shows in citadel siege (5)
26. Intermingled deer, etc., made to stand (7)

29. Arrange story before new writer (6)
31. Former Cuban revolutionary houses one melange (8)
32. Butt of story in speech (4)
33. Speck at edges of ovum (4)
34. Repair lantern I found within (8)
35. Cake or ice cream locked up? (7)
36. What a famous director's called, alternatively, *Kid* (5)

Down

1. Test for gold and a bit of lead (4)
2. Give new order to a peer to work (7)
3. Dislike gold inside of author Lewis's mansions (8)
4. Modify shape later (5)
5. Bits of sand, earth, and lime engineer deftly secured (6)
6. Disturb a tandem with a Fiat? (7)
7. Aware of gizmo's rear not working (4)

8. A female off course (5)
9. Communist roster has baseball team brought back (8)
14. Pastry dish with those French slices (6)
15. Classify as "initially stupidest" or "finally shrewdest" (6)
16. Medley of gang into performing ballroom steps (8)
18. Restore one primarily involved with Art, even loosely (8)
19. Chitchat about meal's last dish (7)
21. Run ad among *Pennsylvania East's* columns? (7)
23. Old Scots hemming old lace ornaments (6)
25. Thick gas, ultimately foul-smelling (5)
27. Time Welles after we edited reports (5)
28. Woman's mate cooked meal (4)
30. Lady smeared mead (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD WATCH

by Anne H. Soukhanov

acquired uncombable hair

noun, a condition in which a person develops coarse, dry hair that stands straight out from the head and is impervious to grooming. Also called *spun glass hair* and technically *pili trianguli et canaliculi*: "Imagine if every day were a bad-hair day. That apparently is the case for a 39-year-old woman thought to be the first documented victim of 'acquired uncombable hair'" (*Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: The word *acquired* sets this malady apart from *congenital uncombable hair*, a syndrome that appears in childhood and has affected more than fifty people since it was identified, in 1973 (its sufferers tend to outgrow it). The patient described above contracted *acquired uncombable hair* two years ago, after taking the anti-androgen spiro-nolactone to combat hair loss; the hair that subsequently grew in was too tangled to comb, even after she used conditioners. Her doctors, at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, discontinued the drug and briefly treated her with steroids (which were of little avail); without further treatment, she is beginning to grow normal hair.

fuzzy elevator *noun*, an elevator system with a computer-driven dispatcher that uses artificial intelligence and *fuzzy logic*—the logic of approximate reasoning—to estimate the number and location of people waiting, the number of passengers in each car, and the proximity of the cars to various floors, and thereby determine where and when an elevator should be assigned: "Even though Otis's first working 'fuzzy' elevator is being installed in a new Japanese hotel, the company sees a big market for the technique in renovations of elevator systems in the United States and else-

A selection of terms that have newly been coined, that have recently acquired new currency, or that have taken on new meanings, compiled by the executive editor of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.

where. . . Besides Otis, several Japanese companies . . . make *fuzzy elevator* dispatchers" (*New York Times*).

BACKGROUND: *Fuzzy elevator* is a media coinage derived from the term *fuzzy logic*, a mathematical theory conceived in 1965 by Lotfi Zadeh, a professor of electrical engineering and computer science at the University of California at Berkeley. *Fuzzy logic* enables a computer to move beyond reasoning limited to simple black-and-white scenarios and to operate in more-complex gray areas. With respect to elevator management, once the purview of human dispatchers, *fuzzy-logic* programming compiles and analyzes data relating to the time between stops at a given floor, the number of buttons that boarding passengers depress,

and changing weight loads in a car before determining which elevator—not necessarily the closest—should be assigned in response to a request. This system can reduce average waiting time by as much as 15 percent. *Fuzzy-logic* controls are becoming increasingly common, particularly in Japan: they are used to improve the performance of small appliances such as electric rice cookers and electric shavers and to regulate the speed of subway trains.

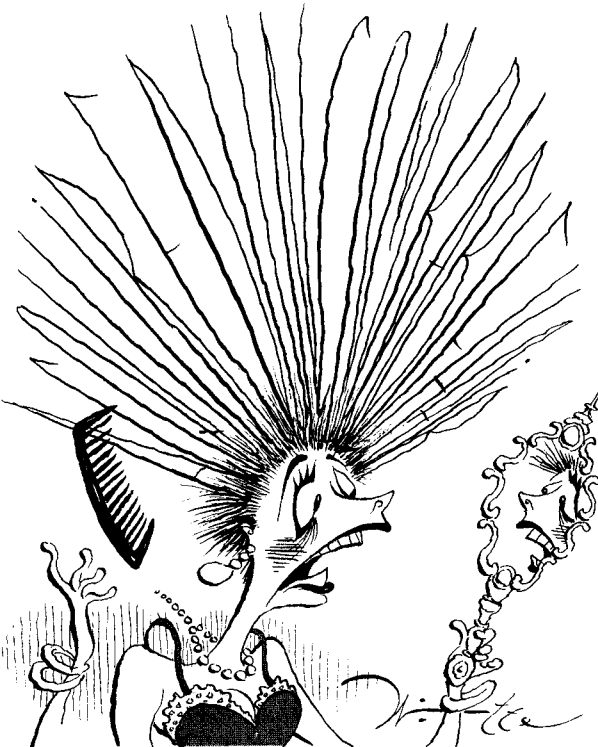
Harold *verb, slang*, to frequent cemeteries in order to contemplate the passage of life into death: "From the ages of 18 to 21, I *Harolded* away almost weekly at the Capilano View Cemetery [in West Vancouver], sitting on its benches, strolling among its

neatly mowed stones, seeing who had died, when and at what age" (Douglas Coupland, *The New Republic*).

BACKGROUND: *Harold* can function not only as a verb but also as a noun ("Implicit in the act of being a *Harold* is a hubristic, self-conscious notion of one's own immortality," according to Coupland). Both usages are derived from the 1971 cult-film classic *Harold and Maude*, about the romance between a disaffected, suicidal youth and an elderly woman who meet while pursuing a hobby they share: attending funerals.

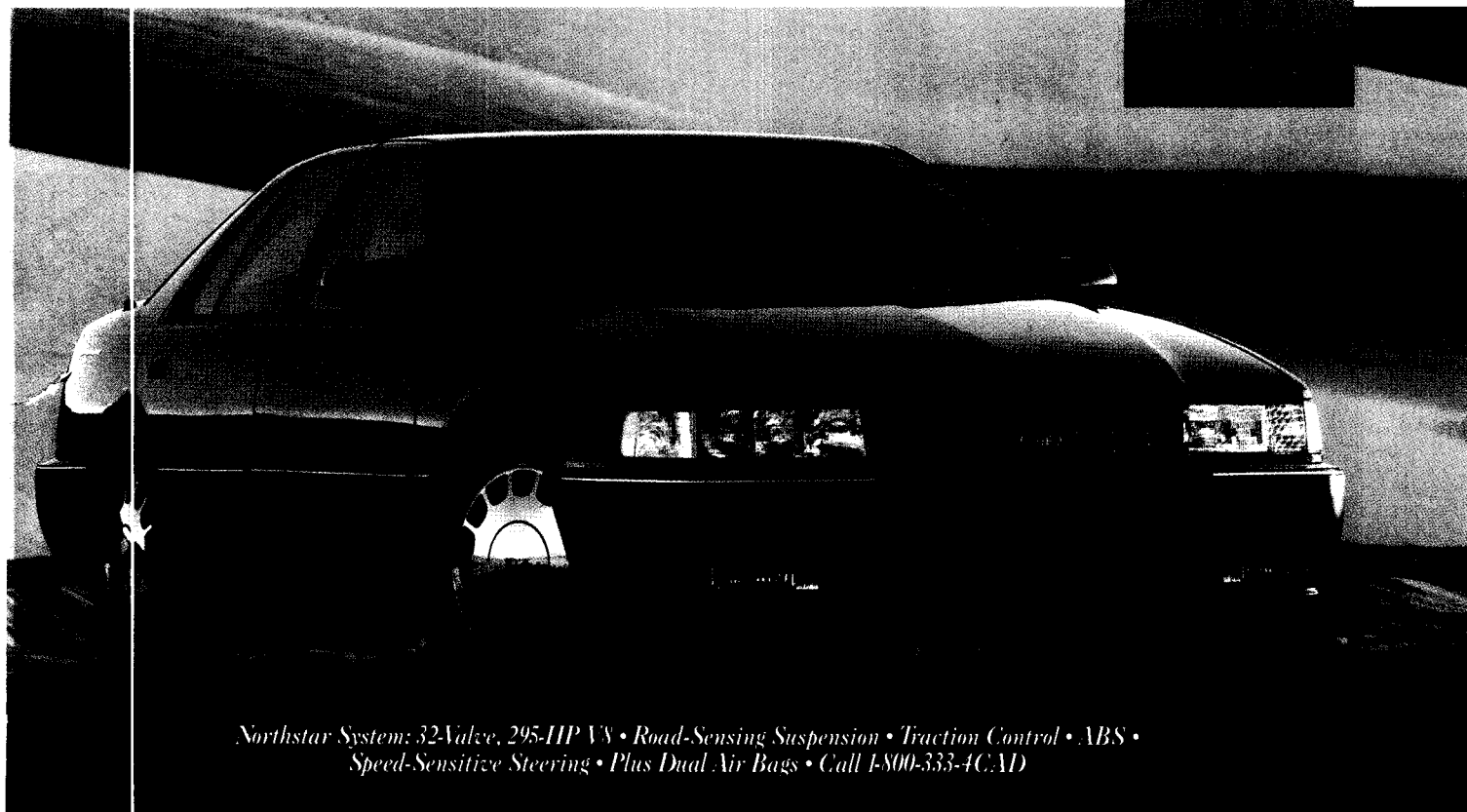
thermagation *noun*, the spot extermination of termites using high heat: "Then there's heat, in several forms of 'thermal' extermination, or 'thermagation.' Either the whole house or a single area may be heated to 150 degrees and more. Or hot pads—'thermal blankets'—may be applied to the walls where termites live" (*Los Angeles Times*).

BACKGROUND: So-called new-wave exterminators are using high-tech alternatives to chemical treatments in California, a state plagued by dry-wood termites. In addition to the *thermagative* methods described above, exterminators may use a *magnetron* to send microwaves through the walls, heating the interior and killing the pests. Another approach entirely is the *Blizzard System*, whereby liquid nitrogen is released through small apertures that have been drilled in wallboards, reducing the interior temperature to -20°F. Finally, there's *Electro-Gun* technology, in which a plug-in gun with a long cord sends a high-voltage, high-frequency (but low current) pulse through the wood, killing most termites on contact, and registering a hit by a change in the arc and sound of the electrical emission.



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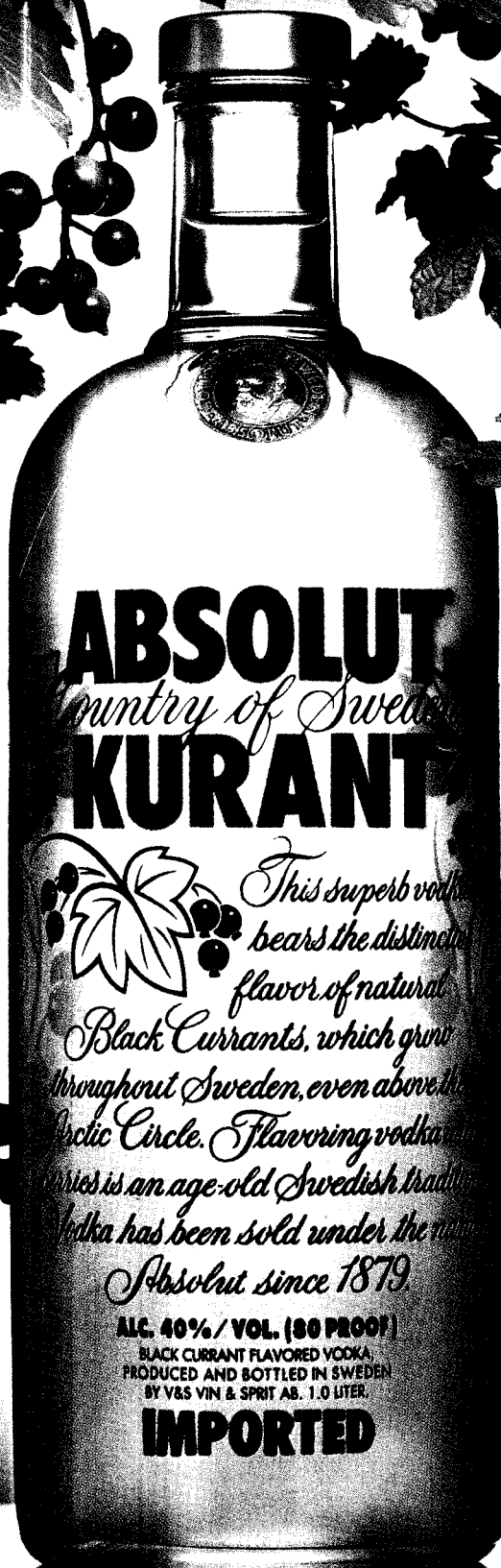


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